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1994 Australia's magazine of the performing arts. September 1990 \$1.95\*

THE 1

# Theatre Australia



## CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC

— Music Drama's revival

## PETER NICHOLLS

— West End playwright

## DRAMA AND THE MEDIA

— plays on radio & TV

## DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

— review of season

## QTC'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

— Film review

John Waters  
and Jack Weaver in  
**THEY'RE PLAYING  
OUR SONG**



# Theatre Australia

SEPTEMBER 1989 - VOLUME 5, NO. 1

## DEPARTMENTS

### COMMENT

4/INFO

9/WHISPERS RUMOURS AND FACTS/*Norman Knott*

45/GUIDE/*Theater Open Dance*

48/THEATRIST'S CROSSWORD

## SPOTLIGHT

11/THEY'RE PLAYING OUR SONG: WATERS AND WEAVER/*Lacy Wagner*

13/QTC - 10TH ANNIVERSARY/*Douglas Bridge*

14/PETER NICHOLLS/*Larry Calbraith*

## FEATURES

15/CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC/*Dorothy Hewitt*

18/DRAMA AND THE MEDIA/*Michelle Field*

## INTERNATIONAL

20/FRANCE/AVIGNON FESTIVAL/*Irving Wardle*

21/USA/THE SEASON PAST/*Karl Leven*

22/UK/FUTURE WORLD HAPPENINGS

## FILM

23/THE EARTHLING/*Elizabeth Riddell*

## DANCE

25/DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM/*William Shoubridge*

27/AUSTRALIAN BALLET TOUR/*Sue D'Urban*

## OPERA

28/KATYA, RIGOLETTO AND PILGRIM'S PROGRESS/*David Geyer*

## REVIEWS

30/ACT/TRAITORS, MESH/*Marguerite Webb*

31/NSW/CYRANO DE BERGERAC/*Robert Page*

BACKYARD, SCARLAN/*Barry O'Connor*

THE DYBBEL K/*Tony Barclay*

THE CONMAN/*Mary O'Connor*

34/QLD/LET'S TWIST AGAIN/*Vivienne Kelly*

TRAVELLING NORTH/*Sylvie de Coise Roque*

THE TEMPEST/*Elizabeth Perkins*

35/SA/ON THE WALLABY, OONE FOR THE MONEY/*Michael Stanley*

THE MOTHER, CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE/*Barry Pless*

36/VIC/A DOLL'S HOUSE, A BOY FOR ME/*Colin Darkwaeth*

THE KEN WRIGHT SHOW, DEATH OF MINNIE, POTIPHAR'S WIFE/*Suzanne Spanner*

42/WA/LOOT/*CG Gillam*

IT WAS THE LARK/*Margot Lake*

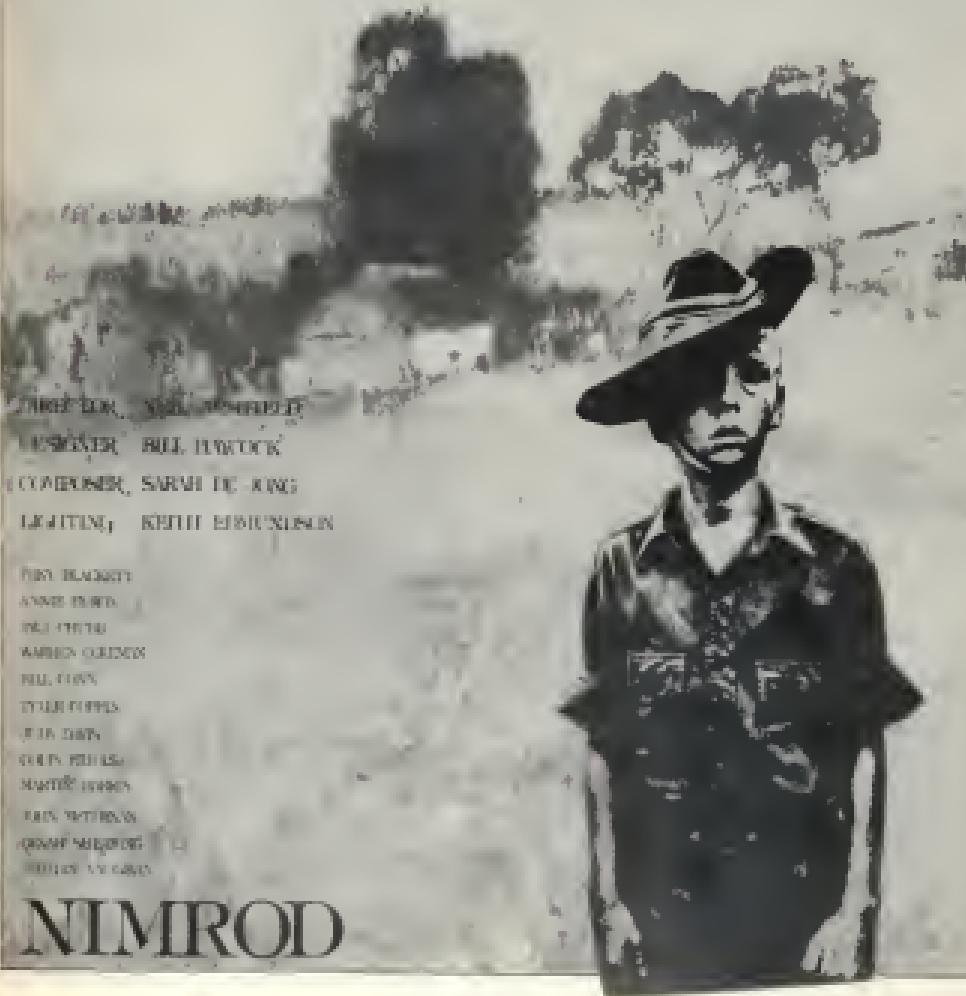
## BOOKS

44/OLD AND NEW/*John McCallum*

45/STATISTICS AND MARKETING/*Paul Fox*

# INSIDE THE ISLAND

LOUIS NOWRA



DIRECTOR, NICK SPALDING  
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## NIMROD

# COMMENT

## THEATRE AS BIG BUSINESS

That the theatre and entertainment industry is a major form of business activity was never doubted by the Elizabethans more particularly by the Victorians with their huge audiences and certainly by commercial theatre entrepreneurs of today. The largest ventures worth millions of dollars to their investors, are produced, packaged and sold with the same strategies as any product to be bought in the supermarket. So we have *Dion Boucicault* on the same basis as films like *Bitter Moon*, where one of the major investments is the producer's record-breaking expenditure. Michael Bigley and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust were not sure that the Drama Theatre of Harlem would be the sell-out success it was and the brilliantly conceived television commercial sets bookings soaring only a few days before opening.

With the advent of Little Theatre and the mantle of subsidy, however, theatre assumed an amateur and propagandist role, with its accolades working for little or nothing, these being measured to cater to the requirements of art rather than the popular and mass concentration on publicising itself, except to an elite. But times have moved on, in Britain the movement engendered by our women — Lillian Baylis, herself an expert in knowledge of the performing arts — has resulted in vast national opera, ballet and theatre companies occupying huge complexes that are at least as important tourist attractions as any West End theatre.

Here, the major subsidised state companies, and notably the MTC, have grown from tiny repertory theatres to major financial organisations. To quote just a handful of statistics: in 1978 the MTC had a turnover of about \$3 million. Now that in the same year was well over \$25 million, give or take of the unaided companies, the *Wall of the Wall*, say \$300,000 paid through its boards and there has been considerable expansion all round in the last two years.

Another indication of the rising business status of theatres is the increasing private sponsorship it is attracting. In spite of euphemistic terms like "patronage" and "sponsorship", commercial houses, quite properly, have sophisticated methods of assessing the value to them of such donations, in terms of advertising and public awareness. Just as major sporting events provide high profile and good environmental advertising, so theatre is starting to make inroads into the area. It is

not simply the Australian Opera who can attract many from Utah, but the State Theatre Company of SA from Dunedin, Nostalgia from Rothmans, the Sydney Festival, Sydney Dance Company and even *Southgate Theatre* in Sydney from AGL.

Even the Taxation Department is looking at theatre in terms of tax, with rules for a major issue of present taxation is based on the conversion of raw materials into valuable products. Certain large companies like the Australian Ballet and Opera have been paying tax over the years on the transformation of wood, paint and fabric into sets and costumes, and the Department has recently demanded similar payments from theatre companies, to be retrospective from their inception. Naturally such an unfunded expense over some ten years for most, would be enormous, and Nostalgia is to fight the tax case, the result of which will set the precedent for all companies.

The Government, it seems, is also looking at recouping investment in entertainment in a more straightforward way, with the possible introduction of a showbusiness talent bank. The idea conceived by Chet Steads (of Jaugh De la Fane) and thought favourably of by Tony Staley, is for a joint venture between the Federal Government and private enterprise to fund the development and promotion of young stars — actors, singers, writers, directors and others — in return for participation in their future equity.

Theatre is moving on apace as part of the educational market and the commercial possibilities of videotaping productions for sale to schools are being investigated. No chance of videotaping a Williamson play, though, in spite of the demand, because of the very high likelihood of the piece being bought for film or television production.

And from various sources the money is being found to finance international tours of increasing numbers of Australian companies. Three of these — the Australian Dance Theatre, Circa Oz and the Ensemble, representing three different capitals — are appearing this month at the Edinburgh Festival.

So are the days of Little Theatre, theatre is now big business.



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# I N F O

A SHAKESPEARE COMPANY ... The latest project is underway funded under the Limited Life Scheme by the Theatre Board. A Ben Crumhorn's group, now calling themselves A Shakespeare Company, consists of some of the most eminent practitioners in the country. Ruth Cracknell, Ben Howell, Arthur Dignam, Diana Farquhar, John Geddes, on release from the Sydney Theatre Company, Ron Haddrick, Jennifer Hagan, John Howard, Robert Matthews, Barry Walker and Jon Wright.

The company's aim is to study in detail and perform a text or texts of Shakespeare's. The project is being pursued away from the time and money pressures of the frantic rehearsal period which has become the tradition of Australian professional theatre. They are attempting to come to a detailed understanding of a text in the light of the vast body of Shakespearean research and criticism available, and secondly to translate this understanding into a simple and direct performance of the text. They are particularly conscious of a need to work in reaction to the prevailing tradition of naturalism in performance.

**LETTER FROM MELBOURNE**... I was impressed with Graeme Blundell's dry elegiac yet penetrating analytical article in the July issue of *T&T*. The loss of major theatre artists like himself is a blow from which Melbourne will feel until he may never escape.

Melbourne's few remaining actors, directors and writers of note or promise will now have no hook to Sydney for creative example and decade-deciding ideas.

For many here this will come as a relief. Melbourne is exhausted. For an epoch it has had to carry the burden and the apprehension as Australia's premier city of ideas.

Melbourne theatre can now relax, enjoy itself, get on with



Ben Crumhorn

Everyone in the project is working on a full-time basis, and the work is being carried out at the old Darlinghurst School behind the Seymour Centre, and at theatres in the Seymour.

In their general survey the Company are linking them-

selves to a consideration of the early plays, the comedies and the late plays, leaving the histories and major tragedies to one side. Work has already begun on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and if time permits they intend to continue with a middle period "problem

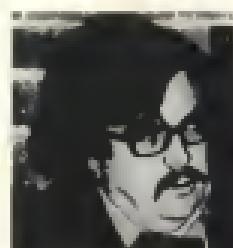
comedy" and one of the late plays.

In November a series of performances at an advanced stage in the work will be given in the Elvocet Theatre at the Seymour Centre.

the more acutely aware a few parties, read Kim Philby, burn us copies of *Black TIDE* and *Desire*. Quarrell departs still along Captain St and beyond.

Blundell has put his long straight finger on one of the most calamitous developments in Australian cultural history: an amateurish and amateurish-practitioners and thinkers actually uprooting themselves and their families, travelling North out of a best for creative fulfillment.

This is the harbinger of a new material maturity. People usually migrate in search of better conditions, a kinder climate, more food, more money, employment, a better press, even freedom. The



migration, however, announces a new and salutary situation, a spurious birth in the theatrical future.

It will take time for Melbourne to adjust to the role of province and colony to the fresh perspective of Sydney and the bush.

If things here are as rank as Blundell's article suggests, then such a relegate could take one of two courses. In the first, placated out of a sense of inferiority to Sydney — something quite novel for Melbourne; secondly a thorough and searching and possible renewal in the light of Sydney's innovations.

It is to Blundell's credit that he has made the later, more heating course a distinct likelihood. So let us hope that from personal concern, his erratic vacillation and disruptive personality, quite properly he has refrained from ever hinting that he might be the one to salvage the Melbourne week. Melbourne's love in Australian theater's just Jack Hibberd.

**FILM AND TV PRODUCTION...** The Australian Film and Television School are now advertising for applicants to their highly intensive, four-week course in film and TV production. They can only take thirty-five participants and the course is scheduled to start on February 2 1981 - the closing date for applications is November 4.

The course includes all aspects of production, from actually using a film camera to editing your own exercise. The film aspect is rounded off with production design and management, and finally the all important marketing.

The next part of the course is concerned with actual filming exercises and seeing the work from all points of view, from

script-writer/director to boom operator. From there you go on to editing in principle to editing your own exercise. The film aspect is rounded off with production design and management, and finally the all important marketing.

The television side starts with studio familiarity and moves straight into exercises including directing light entertainment

and documentary work. Drama direction, script evaluation, visualisation and casting are all major parts of the course. There are also workshops, choreography, seminars and discussion groups.

Entry to this extremely comprehensive course is by written application to AFTRS's and then by a selection committee.

scripted or company work as director and actor.

Two different types of playwright-in-residence grants are offered, one for professional theatre companies for the employment and training of promising new or young playwrights and the other for TIE or community groups for established playwrights to work on the production of new programs and wider community involvement in theatre.

In the past year the Board contributed to the salaries of fifteen playwrights - six residence grants usually being determined on a 1/1 basis and ranging from \$700 to \$30,000 for periods of one to six months.

Guidelines and application forms are available from the Literature Board PD Box 402, North Sydney 2000. Applications on the appropriate form must be received by the Board by the closing date of 30 September 1980.



John Ross

**PLAYWRIGHTS-IN-RESIDENCE...** The Literature Board of the Australia Council is now calling for joint applications from playwrights

and theatre companies for assistance under the 1980 playwright-in-residence scheme funded by the Literature and Theatre Boards.

A playwright-in-residence is a playwright who is attached to a particular theatrical group for a specified period so that he/she can work on his/her

#### MURKIN PIS TO OLD VIC

The State Theatre Company of South Australia's current production *The Way Fromukungan* Dorothy Hewitt's latest musical, is to be toured and taken to London in March next year.

An invitation to bring the production over was extended to Kevin Palmer (the show's director) by the new director of the Old Vic, Timothy West who had seen the company's work during two tours of Australia he has made with the then Prospect Company. The Hon Murray Hill SA Minister for the Arts said, "This overseas tour for the former home of the National Theatre of Great Britain reflects the growing overseas recognition of Australian talent in general and the standard of the S.T.C."

ensemble in particular. This invitation is especially significant following closely on the Australian Dance Theatre's trip to the 1980 Edinburgh Festival."

At this stage it is thought that the entire present will tour to London. Marie D'Arey, Daphne Grey-Robert Gough, Edwin Hodgman, Audrie Leth, Deborah Lisle, Carmel McNamee and Tony Stratton.

The music for *Makukungan* is by Jim Cotter with lighting by Nigel Livingstone and sets and costumes by Sue Russell.

Let's hope the production doesn't share the same fate as *The Child* at the Old Vic, the status of which as a venue has declined somewhat since the departure of the National for their new complex.



Dorothy M. Hill

# I N F O

**CONTINUING SAGA OF CIRQUE DU... Following its ten week season at Sydney's State Theatre, Cirque Du headed off to Papua New Guinea to perform with about 1400 participants from all over the South Pacific at the third South Pacific Festival of Arts, of which Kim Horler was one of the adjudicators.**

The Festival centred in Port Moresby but also reached Lae and Wewak, opened on July 1 and ran for two weeks. During this period Cirque Du presented nine performances, all outdoors, to enthusiastic audiences of up to 10,000 people mostly nationals who had never seen a circus before. They showed through their overwhelming response particularly in cheering and annual work, that the large visual forms used in circus transcended cultural barriers with consonance and their acceptance was aided by the absence of television in PNG; audiences turned up four hours in advance to be sure of getting a good view.

The Australian contingent also consisted of Aboriginal dance groups from the Barony



Cirque Du performance in Papua New Guinea

and Lake Eyre regions of Arnhem Land, the Torres Strait Islanders and Mornington Island, all of whom were extremely well received, and when Cirque Du had a great pleasure to meet and perform with the tour was arranged basically by the Aboriginal

#### Arts Agency

Stephen Champion of Co feels that "perhaps the most measured aspect of this adventure for Cirque Du is our heightened awareness as Australians of the immense cultural wealth and diversity within the South Pacific region. Some-

thing we are going to have felt a part of before we embark on our European tour" - which opened in Rotterdam on August 6 and will then take them through Holland, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and England before returning to Australia in mid-81.

**SONGS FROM SIDESHOW ALIVE** There are first things brewing for Robyn Archer following her triumphant tour of Asia. Tim Helen Marriage wants it for London and Alan (Cost) says The Manzari Carr brothers it will be a smash hit in the USA. 1981 looks like the year when Robyn's international stardom will be born.

Meanwhile she is recording songs from *Sideshow Alive* which she wrote, composed the music for and appeared in along with Robin Nixon, for this year's Adelaide Festival. Now it is to be revised in a new production by Max Oldfield at the Paris in Sydney. Robyn Fisher is to direct, and the cast Robyn, Jan Novacek Hayes and Maguire Kirkpatrick in the roles of the two side-show girls. Opening night is set for October 16.



Courtesy: Hayes

**HARLEM PHOTOS...** There have been so many questions about the superb photographs done for the Dance Theatre of Harlem that the man who shot it all gives us special mention.

The Harlem photo series taken by Paul Crowley of Sydney

Theatre Australia

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

Paul Crowley

dancer theatre of harlem

**WOMEN AT THE SPOT** — Great things are predicted from the National Theatre Company Perth during the next few months, and much from the female members of the company.

Playwright Joanne Nata (established Perth's first lady of theatre) Nata's new one-woman show had its premiere a week ago and there are plans for the rest of the country to go. In later October Marianne Macnaughton has flown out from the UK to handle the production.

The National's present

writer-in-residence Mary Grange has written a play on the life of Charles Kingford Smith which will open at the Playhouse on October 15; the play's title is *The Spirit Square of Paris*.

And with the enormous success of West Australian born writer Dorothy Hewett's *Man From Mukunung* which was commissioned by and had its first production at the National for the Perth Festival in 1979, the company has commissioned her to write yet another play to be performed at the Playhouse in 1981.

**MEET THE LA MAMAS** — **BAKU**, or The Brunswick Artists and Bakers Collective is a new group who showed their first production *Testing Ground* at La Mama last month. BAKU and I have been coming for a long time to the work of Val Kauran, James Corden and Lindy Jones.

During the month La Mama is the venue for a series of performance events incorporating visual arts and performance art by local filmmakers, musicians, actors, writers and visual artists. What follows should remain to be seen but the buzz that will happen is that the boundaries between these forms of expression will be pushed some way further forward, and the unusual, unparagoned will have found a new and hopefully non-temporary home.

The performers are young and relatively inexperienced but their commitment to creating a new sort of theatre language indicates that they are a group who wants to live living. *Ground* heralded the acknowledgement of an exper-

ienter in-residence ... **MICHAEL BLAKEMORE** ... The Melbourne Theatre Company has announced the details of its second season for this year, from September to April 81.

Michael Blakemore, who has left on the coast, for the ill-fated *Breathing*, is directing the O'Neill tragedy *Mourning Becomes Electra* at the Athenaeum but before that comes the second Australian production under the National Port's previous (with the exception of Peter Nichols' *Death and the Maiden*) *Patriots in Parade*. In November Frank Langella will repeat his Brisbane performance as Sherman Whiteside in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Michael's most successful play. *The Man from Yesterday* will make its Melbourne debut in the same theatre.

At Athenaeum, J. Joan Comer's *The Beach* is being postponed for a further six weeks due to unprecedented public demand and it will be followed by Gordon Graham's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.



Malcolm Mcowell

Robert Hewett who has left from an MTC actor-turned-playwright and his first *One Man Show* has gone through the Triplets' planning process to tell production at Russell Street in December. And early next year Dorothy Hewett's more successful play *The Man from Yesterday* will make its Melbourne debut in the same theatre.

At Athenaeum, J. Joan Comer's *The Beach* is being postponed for a further six weeks due to unprecedented public demand and it will be followed by Gordon Graham's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

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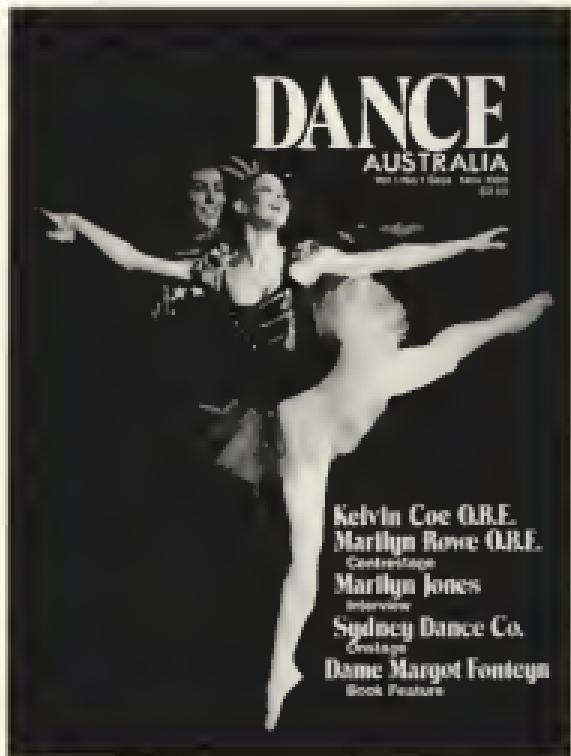
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**Ist.  
issue  
September**

# WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



By Norman Kessel

What an encouraging beginning became for the *Outer Limits* of *Hawkins* became for the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. Its three-week season in Sydney netted a record take of \$620,000 and a non-performance tour to Brisbane collected another \$130,000... an astounding 97 percent capacity paid-for tickets, complete audiences bringing attendance to 100 percent at every performance.

At the time of writing both Melbourne and Adelaide had passed break-even figures and were headed for similar sell-out seasons. Weekly breakdown figure for Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide was \$154,000 and for Brisbane \$112,000. Total break-even figure for the six weeks now was \$882,000, easily exceeded before the tour was half over.

Against the above every review I read credited Michael Edgley as prime mover of the visit. An understandable mistake, of course, because the Edgley organisation has promoted just about every major ballet to come here in recent years. Even the programme had Michael's picture above that of AETT general manager Jeffrey Joynson-Smith.

The fact is, however, that credit for re-opening the *van* belongs solely to the Trust's entrepreneurial division which began negotiations five and a half years ago. Three involved live subsequent tests in New York by the division's administrator, Jeffrey Kessel.

Offered a piece of the action, the alert Michael Edgley International Pty Ltd took a 25 percent investment and JC Williamson Productions Ltd another 20 per cent. The Trust handled administration and management and Edgley contributed his indigitable expertise in promotion and advertising. Final tip to a supremely successful enterprise was the presence of Sir Robert Helpmann as consultant on repertoire.

Will the newest Stephen Sondheim musical, *Marietta*, ever come to Australia? The Adelaide Festival Centre Trust has an option, but programming manager Tony Finsen has been reported as saying "It might be too bloodthirsty for

Adelaide." More likely deterrents are that it folded on Broadway with a loss of \$480,000 and that Finsen termed its London box-office potential as "questionable" especially at a record top ticket price of \$22 in the 2280-seat Drury Lane Theatre. A friend of mine who attended the final preview in London was mildly entertained but found the characters all too stereotyped and the story line disappointingly clichéd.

What's in for playwrights these days? Talking to Peter Nichols in the foyer of Sydney's Theatre Royal on the opening night of his *Born By The Goddess* I asked if this was his first visit to Australia. "Oh yes," he said. "I couldn't possibly afford to come. I'm only here now because the company paid for me. I did, however, pay for my wife."

Here's a thought for local restaurateurs. The famous Simpson's in-the-Strand restaurant is offering a 10 percent discount on dinner served between 6pm and 7.30pm provided the customer holds tickets for an evening performance at any London theatre. Some concessions apply to matinee ticket holders for Saturday lunch.

I return says London light press agent Paul Barnard is moving to Australia but will retain a contact office there at Hobart Advertising.

After a break of five years since the Q Theatre moved to Pittman Lansdowne theatre is back at the AMP Theatre at Sydney's Circular Quay with some interesting predictions that Australian Gas Light Company is an extension of its long and valuable support of the National of Sydney, the Sydney City Council with a cash donation of \$7,000, the Australian Philanthropic Theatre Trust with its entrepreneurial expertise, Production by the Australian Repertory Company, but Gas Company backing has been acknowledged by using the moniker The Living Flame Lansdowne Theatre.

I had already seen some months earlier a preview of the opening production, Paul Alderman's *Rock'n'Night* (which the Q Theatre itself had staged three years ago). This version is neatly designed for presentation in restricted areas as part of an interesting concept by actress Valerie Novakoff called Theatre In The Home. It is well-directed by Michael Morris-Evans and engagingly played by Christine Cameron and Michael Bryant, both currently in *Love Never Dies* at the Music Hall

which also finally closes on September 6 together with Peter Hall, currently in *Circus of Progress* at the Opera House and Julian Haydn-Jones, recently seen in the TV series *Prisoner*.

Morris-Evans is artistic director of the company which is controlled by its three directors, Lord Mayor Nelson Myers, Lady Susan McMahon and Professor Eric

Darrell, with day-to-day running handled by a management committee of three actors, Ron Ratcliffe, Valerie Novakoff and Felicity Gordon.

Meanwhile, the StageArt Company, founded by actors Diane Bushell and Anthony Wheler to present backstage shows at Astor House Theatre, has now introduced *Waitress*—something to do with availability of dates, which may involve irrigation. The company launched offshoot of a production of *Anouilh's A Month in the Country*, which was to have played from July 7 to August 1.

What a variety the past year has provided for onwards and Barry Everett. A night comic performance in the National's *Air Kisses* at the Opera House was followed by an essential four months in London with David Williamson's *The Club*. Back home to two much-disputed roles at Jette Street—the Greek cult proprietor in Lagos Egan's *The Scale of Genghis Khan* (with a credit card TV commercial as a bonus) and the Jewish father of the possessed bride in Solomon Asch's *The Dybbuk*. Next, on September 3, he joins the "Fairstar" for a Summer cruise on which he will appear in a line of revues under the title *Ashanti Australia*. Other members of the company are David Chikora, recently back from overseas and best seen here at the Music Hall, Leah Nielsen and Kay Powell. They return November 28.

*Odeon Companions*, Dept. W. We heard a woman bemoan at the opening night of *El Bar de l'Amour* tell a companion: "I saw a French play a few years ago and it was better than this. It was *Die Freuden der Modesta*."

Sydney director Ted Craig, now operating independently, has had a busy year. Since directing *Just Do It* at the Adelaide Festival Centre (a literary he has directed *Just Do It* three times), New York's Roundabout Theatre and a revival of *Just Do It* for a UK tour which opened in Coventry, commuting between the two countries for the pressures. He will be back in Australia to direct a Melbourne Theatre Company production of *The Elephant Man*, which opens on October 6.

If you're born wondering whatever happened to actress Phoebe Lorch, who is busy reading last cards at clubs and private parties, but that doesn't mean she won't be back on stage as soon as the right role is offered.

If you have any Shakespeare first folios, hang around—they're now worth big money. One sold recently in London for \$197,000 and another in Paris for more than \$600,000!

And talking of prices, John Lennon and Yoko Ono recently sold one of their pedigree Holsten-Premiere coats at the Sotheby's Sale in New York for \$265,000 believed to be a world record.



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# SPOTLIGHT



## They're Playing Our Song – Jacki Weaver and John Waters

by Lucy Wagner

Jacki Weaver and John Waters perhaps the two best known performers in the country, she a tiny person famous for her big personality, he with a huge female following for his tragicomic sex appeal. The casting for the two-person musical *They're Playing Our Song* seems an obvious one, and yet they've only worked together twice before: first in a revue called *God Save The Queen* and more recently in the final episode of *Rush*, the award-winning episode as Waters' parents pass on.

"Everyone was an award except me," says Jacki. "They went to the Logie ceremony to collect Hugh Keays' trophy, 'and John lost it!'"

"Yes, but Hugh didn't mind, he just said his mother collects them. He was very sporting about it," claims the

calm, but add, "He'll probably send someone the next time."

They both appear genuinely enthusiastic about the show, not just another musical (although they don't denigrate the form in any way), but principally a major Neil Simon play with all the qualities you expect of one. The script is tightly written and very funny, and as the plot concerns a composer and lyricist the songs are fully integrated.

John Waters: "It's not exaggerating it's a great writer of theatrical dialogue, it times itself perfectly. It's not a bunch of one-line gags. There are no major decisions about how to do it, it's done, it's like Shaw, you don't need to change a comma. The difficulty is just along a comma."

Supposedly based on the relationship between Marvin Hamlisch and Carol Bayer Sager (who wrote the

music and lyrics respectively) the characters are opposites: she's maturing except in her compositions and the gal "extremely bright, speaks with candour and honesty, has enormous enthusiasm and she's a lot to deal with," to quote Simon himself.

Were they type-cast?

"I think it's all true except extremely bright," says Jacki modestly.

"No I've watched musicians all my working life," John reflects "and they really are a breed apart, not like actors at all. They do tend to be very private people who don't express themselves much other than in their music. The theatricality of this lies in the interplay, she won't stop until she's brought him out."

Other highly theatrical elements are of course the super-sharp banter dialogue, and the alter-ego device. Three gals and three boys make up a

# *"Sometimes I think a lot of what we get paid is for the inconvenience of being known."*

chors, enriching the show visually and musically and, often dressed, representing other facets of Verona and Roma. Playing along with the cast is a twenty-three piece orchestra under the direction of Dale Ringland. But the major onus is firmly on the two leads, singing, dancing and with all the dialogue, scarcely off the stage for a minute. "They just glad it's John he's so easy to work with," says Weaver.

Production-wise, the Australian Song is identical to the American productions, but Jackie Weaver saw the New York show and finds their performances very different. And word director Philip Cusack who has directed all productions, is that the Australians may be the outstanding cast.

Talk of such acclamation, though, always swings the conversation around to an inverse, the cringe, the lack of a star system, the endemic Australian inferiority complex. Jackie Weaver agrees that often people haven't seen overseas work and merely assume that we can't be as good, while in fact we are equally good, equally bad and sometimes equally as indifferent as English or American theatre.

I quoted them a statistic that appeared in last month's issue, that the Theatre Royal was budgeting on 40% houses as break-even for *Song*, whereas it had been 80% for Deborah Kerr in *The Day After the Fair* because overseas names are better box.

"Take *Felicity*," said John, "everyone said it won't do well beside *Magee and Bradley* at the Seymour Centre, although you might get some spill-over. What happened? *Felicity* was wall-to-wall and *Magee and Bradley* were papering their Saturday night houses, so don't tell me Australian actors aren't box office."

Today the main route to recognition is through television (Duster Hollman found out what recognition meant when he walked down the street with a Charlie's Angel, someone quips) as is the case with Weaver and Waters, and



perhaps live theatre would be in a better position of Australian television started making more of the country's acting talent. But this pair concur that the public side of stardom is not something they particularly enjoy.

"Sometimes," muses Jackie Weaver, "I think that a lot of what we get paid is for the inconvenience of being well known. Even acting for subsidised companies, where mostly we are all paid the same, the onus of performing a show falls a lot on us, it should - but it's a lot of extra work."

The lack of performer hierarchy and levels of bankability does mean that the better known can't afford to stick to one medium, let alone get typecast. Both say that working alternatively in film and live theatre are ideal for the actor's craft. Returning to the stage after eighteen months and three for Waters, and even longer, *Bedroom Farce*, for Weaver, is no problem. "It's like riding a bicycle, you don't forget how" (Waters). "It's marvellous to hear that laughter again" (Weaver). "You, you sit a line and fifteen hundred people laugh - that's adrenalin power" (Waters).

Increasingly both of them had to audition for the roles of Verona and Roma twice, and along with several

others.

Jackie Weaver has turned down offers of better money for television work to act in theatre, although the low pay in some subsidised companies (notably one now defunct) drew some headline anecdotes. Perhaps "star" status is a limiting one though, for both would be interested in working for Nimrod or Sydney Theatre Company, but have received no offers of late.

Jackie: "There are some young directors now that I wonder if I'll ever work with. Because there's no real star system no one can afford to get concerned and you just not being asked down to not being wanted. If people think I wouldn't be interested then there's a terrible communication problem. One of the plays I loved doing most was *Roseland* - and that wasn't even a success. Of course you accept lower pay, money isn't everything."

John: "Subsidised theatres, though, should be fighting for audiences the same as commercial theatres, and if you can pack a show for them they should be able to pay the same rates. But that I think they should pay everyone more."

As with most actors, John Waters and Jackie Weaver are pleased if their names, made in film and TV, draw more people to live theatre. She is constantly surprised by people, at Nimrod, even in their thirties and forties coming up after a show to say they enjoyed that first experience of live theatre. Both feel that commercial theatre here should promote our own actors, for its own sake in the long term. Today *Pharda*, tomorrow *Awe*, *Lew*.

Today - and for at least eight months in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. This is *Playing the Song*, tomorrow...? For Jackie Weaver another television series of *The Marriage Game*. For John Waters, he looks forward to helming a great Australian urban, contemporary film - if he gets the offer.

# QTC—10th Anniversary

by Douglas Hodge

The QTC is celebrating its 10th Anniversary with what it calls a "high profile" Heading or directing casts recruited from both local and interstate artists are such names as Ivan Bruce, Ron Graham, Margo Lee, Robin Lupton, Mick Rodger and June Saiter. It's already notched up a smash-hit with *Gipsy* (using the Queensland Theatre Orchestra, which didn't exist a decade ago) and a sell-out season of *Everything North* has just concluded.

Early in its history (in fact after its second production) Katharine Bushnell referred to the Company as a "small miracle" but predicted that though its work at the time was "equal to the best Australia can produce", it would not be accepted overnight.

She was right.

The production that inspired Ms Bushnell's remarks was *Philadelphia Here I Come!* Alan Edwards, who directed it, had described it as a "middle-of-the-road" play. Shortly after it opened a letter was published in the press over the signature "Theatre Lover, Grafting", depicting what the writer alleged was continual blasphemy throughout the play. This led to audience walk-outs, the cancellation of hundreds of bookings and a heated debate in the press and the palaces.

Acceptance in other areas was hard-won, too. The Shakespearean season was opened in 1972 with a production of *Twelfth Night* that was described by one critic as "a Karakata dove into culture". Audiences stayed away in droves. Three years later *The Passing of the Slave*, starring Diane Crispino and Robin Ramsay, drew such a clamorous response that its season was extended and even then the demand for tickets could not be met. The 1978 version of *Ang Lee's Starring Warren Mitchell* was so successful, both commercially and artistically, that it toured to Sydney's Seymour Centre, where it fared every bit as well.

The Company's first attempt at Australian drama (as distinct from a musical) was in 1973 with *Murphy's Coupon*. While nobody would argue that the play is sure-fire box office, the production was a major achievement for so young a company.

The early years spawned some now-famous alumni. The opening production, *A Raisin in the Sun*, featured a young actress in the role of Sade, the maid. Her name was Geraldine Turner. The first schools' company gave Carol Burns one of her first jobs. Ian Karsen and Frank Gallagher are two prominent names from the early days and later, Geoffrey Rush was to start his career at QTC.

One of QTC's major objectives over the decade has been to stress the "Queensland" part of its title by serving not just the capital city but the entire state. To this end regular adult tours are made through country centres and theatre-in-education teams are almost permanently on the road. In a state the size of Queensland this presents enormous logistical and artistic challenges—the difference in climate, lifestyle and taste between, say, Cairns and Cunnamulla is often as wide as the distance that separates them.

The 115 commitment occupies a large portion of the Company's funding, and there are often as many as three tours on the road at once, at least two of them of more than six months' duration. Sometimes they average three performances a day in conditions which are, to say the least, unsophisticated. Special shows have been mounted to cater for the specific needs of children in the remote areas of Arnhem Land and Central Australia. But since the local works, by its very nature, conducted outside the mainstream, even QTC's regular audiences are not fully aware of it.

But the Company feels that it has paid off:

"Through its work in this area we've helped to change the mentality of the people of Queensland," Alan Edwards

said. "We've helped to give a new dignity to the idea of the performing arts—not just in Brisbane, but all over the state, with particular attention to schoolchildren. We now number among our regular audience young adults whose first exposure of theatre ever was through our school performances."

As the company enters its second decade its priorities and policies are being reviewed. It recognises the need to maintain its responsibility to the development of local talent while at the same time strengthening its resources by attracting talent from the national pool. A new approach to country touring is being discussed, wherein it is hoped a better means may be found of serving the individual



Alan Edwards: girl, 1972, photo

needs of regional communities than the present series of one-night stands. The statewide identity is still important.

"There's a train of thought that believes Queensland has little cultural life of any consequence," Edwards says. "It's as widespread as it is erroneous, and we believe we have done much to dispel it. We rate this as one of our proudest achievements."

Douglas Hodge has worked as an editor with the QTC for most of his ten years, and has compiled and written a history of the company, *The Longest Day*, which will be published this month.

# A few moments in the life of Peter Nicholls

by Larry Gifford.

British playwright Peter Nicholls likes to keep busy. He is currently working on two projects: a musical and a pantomime for adults based on an historical theme. He has recently completed a new work *Person Plus* which he hopes the Royal Shakespeare Company will present next autumn.

"I don't like to leave plays lying around for too long, unperformed," he told me, "the trouble is a lot of people get to read them and it's easy for someone to lift an idea and run it into a quickie television play."

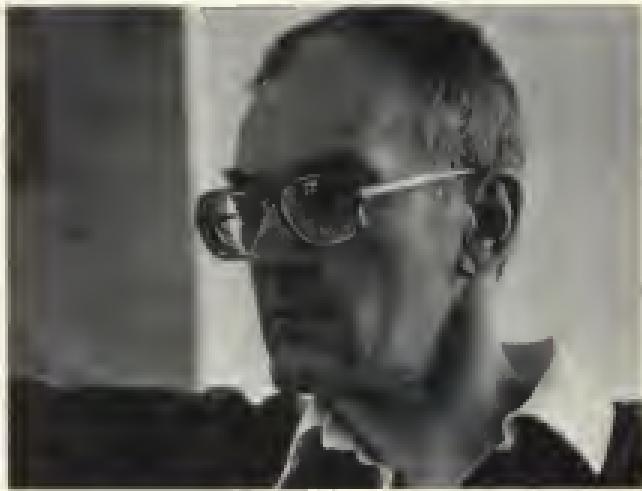
He had interrupted his negotiations with the RSC to make a rush trip to Australia for the Sydney opening of his play *Born In The Garden*. He himself had directed its first production, in Bristol, with Beryl Reid leading the cast. That production had since transferred to the West End.

We were chatting in his hotel room a few hours before its first performance. His main concern was whether its "Englishness" would strike a responsive chord with Australian audiences or whether it would suffer a similar fate to the London production of David Williamson's *Traveling North*. While he admires Williamson's work very much (he and his wife have entertained Williamson in London) he felt that that play didn't travel well. *Born In The Garden* expresses many of his concerns about England, but he was doubtful that they would be shared by us.

He is less concerned with the production of his play, the main worry being the fact that Australian actors tend to play rather loosely with the text.

"You take a great deal of trouble over writing them, making sure they sound right, that they have the rhythms you want them to have, so consequently you don't like to have them changed, so have them mucked up."

No names were mentioned, of



Peter Nicholls Photo: Paul Adkins

course. He suggested that in England, even the most mediocre actors will respect and play a playwright's lines.

I asked him about his new play

"I'll play a good deal more theatrically than *Born In The Garden*, but it is again a family story, again a play about medieval marriage, but more dramatic, more serious, less funny perhaps than the others."

Peter Nicholls acknowledges that the family is his subject:

"Even those plays which don't seem to be about the family, primarily such as *The Novice's Health* which was actually about a number of strangers thrown together in a hospital ward, it was still about the family in the sense that people reconstruct the family, inevitably. Once they got there, one man took on the role of mother, another the role of a father, another that of a son and so on. So you were reconstructing the family as if it were an inevitable part of society. Even if it didn't exist as an institution, people would still voluntarily reconstruct it."

"My plays are all about the restrictions of the family, the horrors

of the family, the compensations, the joys of the family, the comforts, the difficulties of escaping that."

He tends to write from the point of view of an observer, rather than someone who simply wants to express ideas. He also tries to play around with dramatic structure to experiment.

"I don't see the point of writing for the theatre without using the experience of seeing them with a lot of people watching a play."

Very often he feels of other people's plays that they could easily see them on television. He wants his own to have a definite theatrical quality, a quality that would ensure they would only work well in the theater. Consequently he wrote his first stage play comparatively late in life. This, of course, was *A Day In The Death Of Joe Egg* which utilized quite a dazzling array of theatrical devices, principally based on acknowledging the presence of the audience in the theater.

"I think this smearing of the witness, which is the audience, the witness of the meat is something that has to be acknowledged."

# CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC

## By Dorothy Hewett

PHOTOGRAPH BY RONALD HEDGES



Dorothy Hewett's latest play *Men From Makinapin* is to go to the Old Vic, Herne, with Bob Ellis' remark that sixty per cent of successful productions here have music in mind, she writes about music dramas.

In Australia recently—while attending the rehearsals of my play with music, *The Men From Makinapin* I went to one of the last nights of Nick Enright's sold-out season of *On the Wallaby*.

It was a delightful and enlightening experience, and once again proved beyond doubt something I have believed in and mulled over and tried to practise, for years now. The Australian public loves burlesque, comic, song and dance and sentiment.

This day was the judgment before time, the grass roots upwards, majolica, farce, burlesque, pantomime, vaudeville, the undying shades of Gilbert and Sullivan, musical comedy, with a dash of the old set down every newspaper columnist. And there we were over the most hardened of us, crying over Australia's queen of song and dance, the incomparable Banjo Hayes standing centre stage singing "Dear Johnny I have nothing to write about", an uncharmed trumpery if ever I heard one.

In the wings lingered the ghosts of Williamson, Fuller, the Tri, Edgley and Dove, Sarah's Tent show, the Goldfields' melodramas, even Dick

Hannah's *Reindeer*, our dear vanishing.

Recently there has been much talk of reviving the musical theatre in Australia. Last year I went to a Hydro meeting where entrepreneurs, actors, singers, dramatists, et al discussed the feasibility of revivals of the popular musical comedies of the past. Needless to say, nobody thought of an Australian musical. It was left to a young American to point out that the American musical gained its credence and following because it came out of the American experience. Where were the Australian musicals?

"Now I have nothing against *Oklahoma*, *Musical Girl*, *If I Love You*, *Hello Dolly*, *South Pacific*, *Carousel*,

From Bell Street and through St James my first theatrical experience had never to be forgotten. When I was very young I was five, with an elaborate, red dress made of tiers of ruffles, scattered with blue roses. I fell hopelessly in love with the Red Shadow who rode onto the stage of the Perth Capitol, on a huge white horse, mounted with a golden saddle and ornate stirrups.

"My second theatrical experience was J.C. Williamson's *The Six Friends* at May Afterwards came the heady experience of travelling on the Trans-Continent to Sydney with the whole cast. I sat on the knee of the "principal boy" and was fed chocolates by the "principal girl" all across those miles of railway and sea.

At eleven in the Corang Town Hall, built of the local pink stone, I am enthralled while Mrs and Mrs Montague performed the *Woddrum*. The *Saints of Devilson* then were back on the wheat and sheep farm and wrote *Laurel the Little Dancer* for my birthday celebrations. Lynette was played by my little sister in the fancy-dress gowns we made to wear to the CSL children's hall. I played Tom, the dog's lover, and the neighbour's children supports and chorus. It was my first play, with song, dance costumes and a sentimental plot.

From then on there was no stopping me. *After the Church* followed more songs and dances performed at Ruth College, a blasphemous play in three acts, more songs, spectacle and "scenarios" titled *Ab' Jules*, a Melodrama set in the Swiss Alps, a celloing and a German band with a clarinet like horns sounded at 118, as also performed through the great capitals of Europe music behind, a wider mystery called *Death with a Gun* a song that owed much to Hollywood and a ball musical set in Kangaroo Creek, Sydney where I had never been, with duets choraline and I My backdrop in real Hair Sole Shoes. The heroine sang a song on the telephone to her faithless lover with the unforgettable lyrics

There's a blonde on the pavement,  
A red-head at the door,  
Is it any wonder that I do go home,  
But I'm just crying for more, more  
more of that ne-got gay  
in the background of coarse loquac-

ity. *The Chapel Prudhoe* subduced me to the Victorian animals held aloft by my dandy grandfather who owned a Astaire-Rogers, Gene Kelly, Anne Miller, Ruby Keeler Al Jolson Eddie Cantor singing "Tiptoe through the Tulips" Judy Garland and Mackie Roney, the Broadway melodeon Ray Bolger's scat-croon song and dance routine in *The Wizard of Oz*, Esther Williams diving into clouds of pin mint above a swimming pool decorated with a water ballet forming and reverting into star and flower patterns below her, the Ruby Berleka marble staircase seen with mannequins and show girls, running like a giant winding corkscrew while a matinee idol sang "A Pretty Little Melody" and the particular style of a John Garfield, a Hepburn, a Bogart or a Lauren Bacall.

The dramatising of visions, phantasms became part of my stock in trade, learned from all these old lace theatres and early forties movies, Sally Barker standing at the apex of the New Fortune Theatre at the University of WA in *The Chapel Prudhoe* whitelaced in a dramatic death-like costume, Dolly Golden swanning down the staircase in green crepe-de-chene in *Boys Boys And Roses for Dolly* the sum, funeral scene of Estee in *The Goddess Child* with a spill of warm roses over the coffin, the vicious "Toots" of Fatty Bellone and the set all glittering surfaces, hard chrome and deep mirrors. Toots the water drainer and star gazer standing centre with his divining rod at the end of Act one of *The Man from Shalakoa*.

Scenes played like film montages, the element of threat and strangeness in "the stiffness" learnt from the stories, monster figures and the monomaniacs Nana, Robbie and Sarah and the two rock effigies made up a nightmare collage in *The Goldwyn Girls*, where effigies and flesh and blood characters were interchangeable. The stage in *Man and Woman* for Dolly is crowded with dummies, Mute, the innkeeper, the foreman and a real female monster Olie Palle. The Authority figures in *The Chapel Prudhoe* dominate the human figures of Sally and her entourage, making them seem like manipulated marionettes in a breeding arena. The golden-headed dummy of Tatty Bellone in her buckles and skin

ROBERT LINDEN PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY ROBERTSON



young female protagonist of *Man and Woman* starts conversing with the Sybette in a glitzy piano-telephone booth her hand forever clasping that symbol of modern communication, the telephone.

All these are plays with music not only because of the enduring influence of the film and the musical comedy, but for very particular stylistic reasons which are bound up with my personal vision of the theatre and my passionate attachment to language. To find a language that transcends naturalism, and yet has unbreakable links with reality, to express a heightened of experience that will be acceptable to an Australian audience so more freely on an open or veritable stage, so with all the paraphernalia of dream vision spell and story has been its principal struggle in the theatre.

And in this struggle I have discovered that the medium of music the dance, the chorus, the individual song line, the use of folk, popular traditional and original song will enlarge the theatrical vision, act as a quick scene and mood change, give shorthand reformulations illuminate the central character's particular dilemmas, burlesque parody and over-



the romantic expression of the hero or heroine, and create a stage world that moves easily in and out of the real and the fantastical without putting too drastic a strain on the imagination of the audience.

The play with music is different in kind to the musical, as Brecht discovered, but it enables both playwright and audience to keep one foot on the ground of realism and the other high kicking to the stars.

It has the force of a lively and deep running tradition behind it, it is "recognisable", and it was not an accident that one of the most influential of the new Australian dramas was *The Legend of King O'Malley*. Bloody and Filly's somewhat camp through recent history, with a pantomime larkish hero like as pony, and the Federal Parliament as pure vaudeville.

The O'Malley team toured the Sydney Variety - with burlesque shows like Blue Grahame Bond and Boddy in *House on Fire* (Gentridge as a piano transvestite, Hamlet as Kate Isopainel with that never-to-be-forgotten cleavage and Horatio as camp), and *Flairin' Jim Potts*, a bawled

musical about a transported man at Melbourne there were the documentary agit-prop type entertainments like *The Gulls*, Melbourne at the Prism and it was here and in La Mama that Jack Hibberd laid the foundations for his rough-and-ready theatre songs, comic turns, pratfalls and a tomfoolish-ness that goes straight back to Mo and the To.

In *The Ten from Uluru* I was searching for Australian myths, images that went back to the music theatre of my childhood, and fused with the characters, sounds, images, and landscape of the real country towns I lived in and visited and heard about as a child. I used the musical comedy stereotypes, the principal boy and the principal girl. The in-joke is of course that they both go off to play leads in JC Williamson's. From the same source come the happy endings, the panting pringle over, Jack must get his Jill, the duets, the "crowd scenes" the solo, the patriotic and group sings. It is a benign world that has no vicious villains. The hero and heroine (doubtless) are flawed by human failings, the madman contemplates murder but does not carry it out. Polly is not "raped" by the Hebby but just "given a bit of a linge". On the murdered Aborigines in the cockpit cannot be washed offstage, and the only happiness then the outside Burns Traversy and the pure aboriginal Touch of the Tarantula is to take to the wilderness across the saltlates - even there "happiness is mighty hard to find".

The music written by Jim Cotter is an admixture of the romantic, mass hall folk patriotic charms, traditional popular and Elizabetian, with a Noel Coward type duet thrown in for good measure. There is also a sound track known as "The weird night music" which uses every electronic device to create the atmosphere of the little townships as night falls and the spirit of Manly takes over.

In a play with music the music becomes an integral part of the structure of the play, the sound track and the songs are naturally out of the action, the music, the dialogue, pointing up the moment, reminding the audience of what they perhaps already know, or foreshadowing a future action. Sometimes a song will set a character so that the particular song is

associated with their character throughout the play. The music is never intrusive nor are the dance routines. They are not set pieces as in the traditional musical comedy. They slide in and out of the action with as much naturalness as the writer-director, director, musicians, actor, choreographer and lighting time can devise. What they do is help create the imaginative world, the atmosphere by which the audience is drawn into the play, attend on it, is hopefully captivated by it, goes out into the forest, perhaps hunting a couple of the elusive tarts but comes home with them a heightened and magical understanding of the world they have grown up into.

The play with music, unlike the musical can deal with the most complex, human states, with comedy, tragedy, black comedy, play tricks and shakers with time, have the most complicated plot structure, explore human relationships, use the devices of symbolism, expressionism, naturalism, social surrealism as a kind of marvellous admixture seen with songs. A fragmented montage, economies realised and archetypal speech, do not seem awkward placed side by side with the most realistic one-to-one dialogue. The audience, informed by the music of speech and song enlivened by the playfulness of natural comedy and dance movements will follow the playwright into a world of the imagination that recognises no boundaries. At least that is the theory, and the experience seems to bear out that the normally pragmatic Australian who likes his film and theatre as close to the real as possible (whatever that is) will take an amount of guff, burlesque, large, exuberance, vaudeville and poetry wrapped in the form of music and dance.

Perhaps then this is the way out for those of us who espouse "the other theatre" - a way that is half-baked in Australian tradition so that the audience read the synopsis and follow, past the ghosts of Mac George Wallace, Nellie Melba singing "Home Sweet Home", Nellie Stewart, Our Glad the Marquis, the tenors, the "Jollies" and the whole glorious band into the poems, the style the plasticity, and the overall vision that can illuminate our lives in the theatre.

# THEATRE IN THE MEDIA

MICHELE FIELD LOOKS AT  
FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR

Retrospectively 1980 is going to look like a turning-point in Australian radio and television drama. It was the year ABC-FM drama productions flowered in Adelaide. It was the year when the ABC-TV Drama Department discovered the country's obscure playwrights and produced six stage plays to a standard that the state theatre companies had set. It was the year the ABC's Committee of Review considered the recommendations on media drama submitted by the Australia Council, the Writers Guild, Actors Equity and others. It is the year the ABC may launch a *Espresso*-type magazine that will discuss not only its own drama programmes but also will review live theatre performances. It is the year the Federal Government announced its plans for cable television, a development which will completely change the complexion of media drama.

Despite the rash of developments, however, radio and television drama still have their problems. Many problems arise from the discredited suspicion that alienates people in the live theatre from those who work in media drama. In principle, for instance, it would seem like a good idea to down the cost of a current stage-play into an ABC recording studio for an afternoon, to reproduce the performance for radio audiences. But both the ABC and the theatre managements find it unacceptable in practice.

There are also fiscal obstacles to the developments that should be taking place in media drama. ABC-FM is chronically short of money, both to execute the plays it has commissioned



Above: Members of the commission of the ABC's Drama Department

and to keep the commissions flowing out to the writers. The ABC suggests that it is also the shortage of money that creates antipathies with the wider theatre community, because it cannot afford to hire the work of freelance drama producers or to employ freelance producers in its own studios. The ABC broadcasts virtually nothing of Australian drama unless it's the work of its own staff.

But the greatest obstacle of all is the distance that separates media drama from its audience. Radio drama is the Red China of the theatre world: the audience is legion but mute, and the critics either ignore it or are alienated. (Barry Hill of the Melbourne Age is, I think, the only China-watcher of any substance.)

Rapid changes in the technology of television broadcasting, however, are changing all this. The viewer of a television play is obviously going to respond less passively if he has gone in

the trouble to tape the performance on his video-cassette recorder and replay it when he feels most receptive. Also, if a cable-television system involves a meter which charges the viewer for each play he watches, he is motivated to pay closer attention to get his money's worth.

Any Pay-TV system is going to drastically shift the financial balance-of-power in the theatre world. By 1983 Pay-TV in the United States will have a revenue of \$6-57 billion, if one divides by 16 to take account of Australia's smaller population, that is still a projected \$440 million revenue for Pay-TV here. If even one-tenth of this money is channeled back into producing stage-plays for this discriminating television audience (a small share of what is to be spent having the rights to show movies simultaneously with their commercial cinema distribution), it will make an enormous difference to the livelihood

of playwrights, actors and directors.

The American body which corresponds to our Australia Council (the National Endowment for the Arts) has a Media Arts Program which emphatically encourages the production of one-off plays on American networks. So far, the Australia Council has not taken a stand on this. However, in the Australia Council's submission to the Committee of Review of the ABC, it was recommended that ABC-TV broadcast more live theatre productions straight from the theatres. (The Annex Committee which made the same recommendation to the BBC in its 1977 report used a wonderful euphemism, referring to the televising of "productions created for other places.") The head of ABC-TV drama, Cecil Darnell, however, believes that production values fall so low in that kind of programme. What can be done when plays are textually revised and remounted for television is shown in the six plays of the Australian Theatre Festival, but that is the only option when the expense stands in the way of enjoying good Australian drama as a regular TV diet.

The alternative is to buy one-off dramas from overseas, such as the series ensured for Stuart Wagstaff to compose. ABC-TV buys fifteen foreign plays a year, mainly from Britain, the United States and Canada. Using a much broader definition of "television drama" than I accept (in fact counting everything that's aired), the ABC offers about 400 hours of drama a year - 80 hours of which it produces itself. Of those 80, less than 20 hours would be "plays" in the sense that the live theatre understands the word.

The figures argue the well-known point that small English-speaking countries like Australia and Ireland are especially vulnerable to imports from the two large English-speaking television-producing countries. Under that handicap, Australian television may be giving us as much serious drama as we can reasonably expect. Or, maybe not.

The Sydney audience of a Sunday afternoon radio play is roughly twice the audience which the Nomed does in a whole year. ABC Radio runs four "Theatre" Playbreaks (Radio 1 on Friday mornings), which broadcast 48 plays in the 1978-79 season, 17 by Australian writers, Classical World

Theatre (Radio 2 on Saturday nights) which broadcast 23 plays last year, 8 by Australian writers, Sunday Play (Radio 2 on Sunday afternoons) which broadcast 52 plays in 1978-79, 28 by Australians, and Audio Writers' Avenue (ABC-FM on Monday nights) which broadcast 36 plays last year about a third by Australian writers. That is more than 150 plays on ABC Radio - roughly 50% more plays than all the theatre companies around the country produced in their major seasons in 1978 (139 radio plays to 105 stage plays).

In 1978-79, about a third of the radio plays were by Australian writers. And a third of the 105 major theatre plays in 1978 were Australian. Four-fifths of the ABC Radio plays had Australian producers and actors (the rest were purchased from the BBC) but since radio drama provides such short-term contracts and remunerates talent so poorly, it cannot be compared to the live theatre as an employer of talent. Producer Andrew McLennan did wonders on a meagre \$14,000 budget for ABC-FM drama in 1980-81, even the \$60,000 budget for a year of Sunday Plays isn't grand when compared to cost of his theatre - in fact, it is less than one-fifth of the Government's annual subsidy to the Nomed Theatre alone.

Given the smallness of the bat, it's remarkable how much talent ABC Radio drama does attract. The history

of the radio play in English (just like the German genre, for instance) is a history of poorly adapted stage plays. This is an odd way for a genre to grow.

It is as though the novel had developed out of those awkward "narrations" of films and television series that are now so pervasive. British radio drama broke from these origins and became an innovative literary and dramatic form in its own right in the 1940s and 1960s, with writers like Samuel Beckett, Louis MacNeice, Dylan Thomas, John Mortimer and Muriel Spark. ABC Radio drama was not far behind, but come slowly; it is only recently that we see it as an ascendant art. Amongst the writers who were commissioned by ABC Radio for plays this year are Frank Moorhouse, Louis Nowra, David Foster, David Allen and (the ABC's own playwriting discovery) Kevin Breuer. Harry Oakley's *The Great God Mogenodon* was commissioned by ABC-FM drama published by the University of Queensland Press, sold to the BBC and to "Tartarus" in the United States, and is the official Australian entry in the Italia Prize.

As I see it, radio and television drama have no responsibilities, perhaps these are somewhat contradictory, when budgets and talent cannot serve both masters. One responsibility is to develop a distinctive type of theatre suited to the media, and to give those writers, actors and directors who want to specialize in this kind of drama a range of possibilities in which to move. The other responsibility, I think, is to electronically convey the experience of live theatre to anyone who, for reasons of expense or distance, difficulty or disablement, cannot attend a performance in a physical theatre. As far back as the 1942 BBC *Newsbook*, this responsibility is expressed: "to provide... theatrical entertainment for lovers of drama cut off by circumstances from the theatre itself." And as recently as the Australia Council's submission to the Committee of Review last June, the ABC is exhorted to remember this: "The whole public should be entitled to see the very best performances in government-subsidized theatres and concert halls, even though those, relayed in the media, may not provide the same experience."



Muriel Spark, ABC producer of *A Game in Death*.

# INTERN

## The season past: summing up

By Karl Levitt

As we look forward to the theatrical season about to begin, it might be appropriate to take a final glance at the season past. As Dorothy Parker says:

"It's manners to take a summary."

As to what you got out of it all?

So here follow some highly personal Notes and some very Random Awards that for me sum up the 1979-80 New York season.

Company Note: It's clear that the creative strength of the New York theatre lies in the theatre companies of Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway. The proliferation of these companies contributes to assure us each with an individual identity and an artistic plan of its own. Within these companies there is an Establishment such as the Public Theatre, the Manhattan Theatre Club and the Circle Repertory — but the price we pay is a fringe that might only be called fringe. On any weekend in the season, there's at least a hundred to choose from. Long may they create delightful bubblegum!

Favourite plays of the season:

- *Max Appeal* — Burt C Davis
- *Lady Astor Blows* — Kevin O'Malley
- *Children of a Lesser God* — Mark Medoff
- *Tally's Folly* — Langford Wilson
- *Diva Fish, Son and I* — Pam Gems
- *The Sorrows of Stephen* — Peter Parnell

Off is One This season bubbling Off-Broadway moved into its own as a source to supply the mainstream of Broadway. Principally those were *Tally's Folly* from the Circle Repertory, *Home from the Negro Ensemble*, *Sorrows* from the Chelsea Theatre, *Max Appeal* (Manhattan Theatre Club) and *Requiem* (St Peter's Church Theatre) are both ready to go Broadway for the coming season. Given the staginess soon on Broadway and the much more creative processes of Off-Broadway, the movement is a heartening one.

The Importance of Being Earnest Awards: De Ceuve International de



Susan Sarandon and Edie Baskin in *A Couple Who Checks Nothing Against Talking*



Romantic comedy in Jim Dale as F.T.  
Brennan Photo: Martha Swartz  
Crescent Theatres under the direction of Peter Brook

Look Back in Anger:

Revisals were the order of the day, particularly among musicals. We had *Perry Mason* (from Texas), *West Side Story*, *The Most Happy Fella* and it was nice to know that the note is still as high as an elephant's eye in *Okla-hooga*. Richard Burton borrowing some Merlin magic still charmed twenty years later as King Arthur in *Camelot*. There was also *Witch Go The*

*Blue*, *Look Back in Anger* and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Even new shows tried to incorporate an allusion from yesterday. *Romantic Comedy* was an updated *The Moon Is Blue* (with just a dash of male nudity) and *Super Babies* an affectionate look at birthplace as it might have been. Both these shows judged the public's pulse very accurately and were unqualified hits. The best revival was Paul Draper's *Murphy's Law* by placing its 1939 setting back in the twenties and casting wonderful actresses in the four parts (Nancy Marchand, Maureen O'Sullivan, Elizabeth Wilson, Teresa Wright). It's hard to believe that the original ever looked as good as this happy revival.

Favourite female performances:

- Lauri Kennedy (*Lady Astor Blows*, *Moyer Barber*) We used to demonstrate in one season a range not allowed most American actresses)
- By the Gender (*Brennan*)
- Maggie Smith (*Night And Day*)
- Edie Baskin (*A Couple Who Checks Nothing Against Talking*)
- Irene Worth (*The Lash From Delaplane*)
- Maureen Anderman (*The Lash From Delaplane* and *Sandie Rummets At The Ranch*)

Ranking Out: The season saw some leading playwrights stumble:

- Tennessee Williams — *Clothes For A*

# ATIONAL

## Summer Movie

- Edward Albee *The Lark* From Disappearing
- Howard Da Silva *Goodbye Field*
- Thomas Bernhard *Schloss Ein Mörder*
- They may be down but they are definitely not out

## The Youngest, Most Promising Playwright

- David Henry Hwang author of *Fish at the Public Theater*. At the age of twenty-two he succeeds in blending modern drama with Chinese classical theatre to make an original and ingenious play

The Women Plays about women, sometimes by women, provided switchback with some fine appearances and kept the feminine viewpoint firmly in the foreground. Two of the season's best plays were about women. Pam Grier's *One Fish Six* and Paulette Grim's *Death of a Salesman* both crafted I ordies that were very real in the Joe Mantua Theatre Club production. And I often think of the women of O'Mearan's *Madden*, family or their laughter in streaming St Louis in 1919. They have energized my imagination for a lifetime. As well Pat Carroll had a personal triumph in *General Santa*. General Santa Gertrude Stover and Mary Tyler Moore showed she was made of stern historical stuff in *What Life Is It Anyway?* Women without men was the theme in both *Three Men and A Couple Wine Club*. All these wonderful women in *Moving On*. As Jossen made a charming statement about survival. Meanwhile last season's most famous try for getting All At One Together and Taking It On The Head found new audiences this season and the grandmother of the whole tribe, Lorraine, now in full tilt, is doing very nicely, thank you.

## Paramount male performances

- Milt Orlitz — *Miss Appeal*
- Brian Murray — *The Winter's Tale*, *Berberian*
- Ted Hirsh — *Tidbit* + *Folk*
- John Rubinstein — *Children Of A Lesser God*
- Jon Dale — *Barbers*
- Play deserving a wider audience
- Judi Dench — *Blithe*
- Sondra Radvanov In *The Man With The Harp* needs to tidy and tighten but there's a Gorky-type play here of interest to many people

Brooklynn Prince. The initial season of the

ambitious RAM Theatre Company was most encouraging. David Jones as director unearthed three unknown but worthwhile plays. Gorky's *Berberians*, Charles MacArthur's *Ahmed* (by A. Sato) and Rachel Crozier's *We Must Be All* were ready for restoration (actually Berberians was making its American debut and with large casts only possible in a company of this nature). A resident classical repertory company has long been a recurring dream in the American theater. This latest attempt is certainly on the right track and deserving of praise for its future plans and its present accomplishments. Such a repertory company allows us to see young American performers grow before our eyes — a very happy experience. At the end of the five plays season it was like taking leave of a family.

Plays from this season that you know will be playing in Purgatory when you arrive:

- *Clarissa*
- *Miranda Of A Painter*
- *Mare And Blue*

"He shall be still my soul, it is but for a season. Let us endure an hour and see injustice done."

## Avignon Festival — touch and go

### FRANZ K.

by Irving Wardle

In over twenty years of visiting the Avignon Theatre Festival I have never failed to discover something precious. But it was touch and go this year. Things got off to a bad start with the first newspaper I picked up, which carried the following open-coding pronouncement from the festival's new director, Bernard Fornier d'Acire: "Finis d'interprétation théâtrale, comez l'heure pour le cinéma." So far, I am glad to report, this remains an empty threat and what M. d'Acire means, I think, is that now the old guard of French repertory is to die as a dinosaur. Avignon had better cut its losses and concentrate on "decentralized" programming, which this year brought Shakespeare and the Greeks under umbrella.

I confess that the chance of seeing the

talented Maria Casares in *The Winter's Tale* blundered me to the supporting Badajoz events which as it turned out were both drama school shows, while the undramatic star of *Catilina Stephie* was putting in a frenzied appearance in the chaotic role of Time. Admittedly it was some apprenticeship. The platform of the Cour d'Honneur was spread with a vast silk cloth, rippling and billowing under the gusts of the mineral and healths, displaying the head of Minos Casares like a sterilizing specimen with a raise of her body she then transferred the cloth into a gigantic ball dress, and launched onto the impasse lines as if she were holding the hand of everybody there. Marvellously the people have returned to life.

The production was the work of the distinguished director-design partnership of Jorge Lanata and Mat Rogers who otherwise lie flat on their faces in carrying up late Shakespearean romance on a stage that encourages the greatest excesses of French tact.

Worse was to follow in the second Palais des Papes spectacular, Jean-Pierre Michel's *La Malédiction*. Told from the three ancient tragedues and Brecht, it told the story of Oedipus's children with the aim of hanging the shadow of original sin around the necks of the suffering Greeks and featured another barn-storming company giving their elongated voices against two in-can percussion groups and sending hairy up-and-down a bath half-melted chocolate ice-cream representing the wall of Thetis.

Brilliant, by contrast was Gerald Gorin's adaptation of the *Orestes* at his resident Angoulême theatre, the Chez Neuf. Supported by a few oft-sometimes magical images, this was a determinedly intimate view of the trilogy, concentrating on personal relationships to the almost total exclusion of the Chorus. With performances as good as Fabrice Colletier's Electra this seemed more like subtlety than impudent. And if the music was not Aeschylus it was what one would like to get and never does from Years.

The real gem of the week turned up outside the co-ordinated events, the Canada de Caen production of Jakob Leib's *Le Amori Marca*. Considering the English-speaking theater's enthusiasm for Brecht, I have never understood why

here, he chose related contemporary genres, has been somewhat fulsomely shoulder'd. In the case of *Messire* there is the sheer problem of staging the partly "coded" or anachronistic scenes depicting disasters of Christian saints. And so the prince is a creature of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. His stolid henchmen have won Rydbergs a prototype of Saxon control. The libertine duellist Capucin who takes refuge on Rydbergs' estate is a grand Company Almanac. While she monologues Donna Diana who burns the Count in jail in the wake of poisoning her father and bringing the family jewels debunks some of respectable literary analysis.

The due to the whole thing, as the Cuban director Michel Fabre masterfully demonstrates in every classic hyper-expressive page, every effort contradicting the previous one. French acting may be deficient in its colouring (softly shaded) given that it is unbearable in black and white.

Fabre's main visual theme is to transport one of the final scenes in the opening. This is a theatrical encounter between a young dilettante and his seductively phallic father, and it has the effect of preventing the ensuing play as the mannequin shows the old man going off to sex. Thus George Marvolt's purloined set is fitted with two prosceniums, a miniature pavilion a tier that rolls numerously down stage, trapping the curtain fibreglass. When the dazed duellist in excess drives the

# FILM

BY JONATHAN ROBERTS



## The Earthling — pretentiousness plus zoo.

*The Earthling* is said to have been made a cost of £1.5 million and is an American-Australian co-production money and stars and producer from the US, a British director and Australian sub-cont crew and animals. Especially the animals. Regardless of environment or time of day or feeding habits of the animals, they throng pastures, kroala, kangaroos do graw, magpies fragment oaks, cockatoos wallabies, snakes frogs emufish wild dogs eagles koalabearas, froo ducks, cockatoos you name it, they have it.

The good news is that the Australian complement is said to have been paid far more than is usually available on most Aus productions. They earned it, having to recite some of the most banal dialogue ever committed to paper for a script. The species are reserved mostly for William Holden, the visiting star with stuporous interpolations from the other visitor, an open-mouthed American pteric named Rikki Schroeder.

The director is Peter Collinson. I looked him up in my Halliwell (admittedly the 1979 edition) and found this note: "British director who quickly slumped from any pretentiousness to routine clichés." The two films of his that I recall are *Up the Junction* and *The Baden Job*, not bad in all. But with *The Earthling* he appears to have slipped back into arty pretentiousness plus one.

The film is not, however, intend for Australian audiences or at least for audiences above and which is about Rikki Schroeder's age. It must be destined for US television. The story is about an ageing Australian named Foley who has lived in the US for forty years and returns to Australia, specifically the area around Burragorang Tops in NSW to find the shack he had built of over stone and timber



Rikki Schroeder and Helen Mirren in *The Earthling*. Photo: Alan Parker

and die there. He travels by bus as far as a township inhabited by survivors of local television series, including Bas, Barron, Willie Fennell, the talented NZ actress Pig Brown and Alwyn Korky, together with a clever kid who works the flower, some goats and an unlikely Rock of geese.

The basement is the bar run by Barron, a wise and cryptic thug about town, a family of which then appears: Ralph Thompson, Olivia Harrison and Rikki Schroeder, in a camper van. The couple light while the bus looks at the scenery. The camper van stops off a ridge taking the tourists. The boy climbs down several miles of rock face (held by men and clad but the sang god lies there). In this movie, it would have housed. The boy follows his host, escorted by the animals mentioned above plus a pack of noisy bush rats, until he catches up with Foley, who has abandoned a horse and is walking with the aid of a stout stick.

Foley is unconvincing to say the least. He makes the boy catch his own fish while

delivering polemics about living off the land but never taking more than you need. He interrupts himself with the occasional bear attack. He kills natives and a kangaroo but is compensated by a woman which gets away. The pair are followed by wild dogs as he and his equally callous collection of helpmates just could hope to find.

When they reach the shack it is decorated with the local wildlife including some mixed breed species they have a bath in a thermal pool to wash away their stink and traces of their hide. Rikki plays with a duckling in the steam pool. Boiled duckling!

Of course the whole thing's a joke, and a fairly boring joke at that. The story was written in the US by Larry Coker and adapted by someone. What name escapes me, who seems not to have related even some of the text to another. It is beautifully photographed by Dan McAlpine, more than such an unapertly pie together farrago deserves.

# BOOKS

**Paul Dier looks at Australian Theatre/I, the Melbourne Theatre Company Annual Report for 1979, and Marketing the Arts.**

*Australian Theatre/I* is a financial summary of the twenty-eight drama, drama and puppetry companies receiving so-called general grants from the Theatre Board between 1974 and 1978. Compiled by John Keay and John Agius, it is the first published document to survey the accounts of these companies and is worth its weight in subsidy.

Statistics will tell you anything, and no doubt every theatre administrator will extract and bend all sorts of relevant comparisons to help his own grantmanship for 1981's applications. This could be the start of chaos: in 1978 the twenty-eight companies sold 2,388,000 tickets over 10,933 performances (1974: 2,067,000 tickets over 7,837 performances). There were 296 main productions in 1978 (352 in 1974). The companies generated \$9,056,000 income before subsidy in 1978 (1974: \$4,728,000), spent \$18,859,000 (\$8,700,000 in 1974) and received \$9,491,000 in subsidy (\$3,851,000 in 1974). In 1978, 52% of expenditure went on wages, 29% on production and theatre costs, 10% on sales and promotion and 9% on administration. Other tables reveal Federal and State contribution comparisons State by State per head of population. The States' per capita contribution to operating expenditure is

1978 was ACT 10 cents, Tasmania 13 cents, New South Wales 18 cents, Victoria 23 cents, Western Australia 27 cents, Queensland 37 cents, South Australia 83 cents.

So much for the overall figures. The twenty-eight companies each have a Statement of income and expenditure, attendance analysis, and abbreviated balance sheet. A foreword on each company sketches its decision-making structure and membership (current Theatre Board waverpath), history, annual publications and 1978 repertoire (author names should have been included). In turnover they range from the Australian Ballet Foundation (total income \$4,365,000) to Dance Center Limited (\$114,000), from the Melbourne Theatre Company (\$2,526,000) to Popular Theatre Troupe (\$112,000) and from the Marionette Theatre of Australia Limited (\$318,000) to Little Patch Theatre Incorporated (\$34,000). You can work out how much subsidy each company receives for every ticket sold: for Nimrod Street Theatre Company \$1.22, MTC \$3.77. You can work out how much of the state budget goes to arts (eg Tasmania 30%, Australian Ballet 26%, Hole-In-The-Wall Theatre 75%). God knows what good this will do you except help you pass your next arts administration examination on the value of market principle.

Regrettably what you cannot find out from *Australian Theatre/I* is just why these continuing theatres are general grant companies of the Australia Council. The statistics are not preface to the context of Theatre Board policy. Hence the Hunter Valley Theatre Company, Hoopla Theatre Foundation, The Stage Company, Tassie and La Boite are excluded. Of equal interest would have been a schedule of grants made for projects and other special purposes. Next year it will be curious to see the results of the suddenly redundant grants made to regional companies and the self-destruct grants to the controversial projects of Terry O'Connell and Ron Chapman.

Nor, alas, will the statistics tell you how much surplus Netred made out of Travelling North, or how much the Queensland Theatre Company spent on Giger, or how much the Australian Ballet earned from foreign tours. For these figures try the individual Annual Accounts of the Companies. The Melbourne Theatre Company has just published theirs for 1979. They employed 153 permanent and part-time staff, plus 108 rentals and 106 actors were engaged. 1979 was a record year for MTC — audiences increased by

20%, the productions playing to 70% attendance at the Athenaeum and 91% at Russell Street Theatre. There were 712 performances of thirteen major productions (but only four plays by Australian) playing to 381,123 people. MTC made an operating surplus of \$26,323. Mr Suttee's report includes plans for an enlarged company with large grants to occupy the Victorian Arts Centre Playhouse in 1982. There is no mention of their rehausing any of the other theatres. Have a look, no, at the even glossier full-colour Australian Ballet Foundation Annual Report and Accounts for 1979, to analyse their 1979 surplus of \$228,847 (1978: \$448,317) and accumulated funds of \$947,200.

A.R.T.S. Limited has published its third study booklet for arts administrators and board members. Following *Approaching the Private Sector for Support and Strengthening the Governance of Arts Organisations: Towards Managing the Arts*. This is an opportune, rudimentary guide to promotion, costing, market research, budgeting, pricing, subscription discounts, developing a style, audience surveys, box offices and press relations. No one will become a quasi-synical showman from reading it, but it is nonetheless packed with useful common sense and will be a tidy reference to managers of small companies without pretentious speculation. What about you?

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# DANCE

BY WILLIAM  
THOMAS



## Dance Theatre of Harlem

There would be very few dance companies in my experience which can change their personalities from one work to the next so much as the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

Their dancer Balanchine's *Serenade* like manipulated refugees in the style they perform the same choreographer's *Four Temperaments* like a manifesto and wear such pieces as *Allegro* and *Franz* Gruenfeld like an emblem.

The company's performances tell us, as other commentators have noted, that black can dance classical ballet; then rush on to make the larger point that dancing is an amorphous form, diverse and unconfined.

This reflexive of means was one of the great joys of their Sydney season. One of the most exhilarating aspects was the types of work chosen and the way audiences here reacted to them. And the whole venture started off on the wrong footing due to the way the Sydney corporation presented them, isolating them as a company that gave in "classical ballet with soul" falling over again onto a bag of Ad-mix plonk for what Ballet, classical modern or in-between doesn't have soul (whatever that may be).

Yet *Four Temperaments* and *Serenade* were masterpieces that focused the attention on the quality of the dance stage, while *Allegro* and *Franz* Gruenfeld were apparently created to show off the strengths and personalities of the people performing them.

*Serenade* was danced in a soft glow of remote effort, while *Franz* Gruenfeld and Spanish *Barber* looked effortless, linking the ethnic background ability and heritage of the dancers against the comment. When those latter works took the stage the icy winds of coolness, professional analysis swept the theatre, but it was the Balanchine pieces that covered new ground, both for the performers and the audience.



But our audiences are so over-educated and apathetic that they don't respond to anything but the fireworks and what I would call "spectacle pieces." They read a ballet like *Brahms* only finding sense in the bits that stuck out. They palpably were along wanting to see "black dancing" not "dancers dancing," but if the popular reaction to the Australian Ballet is anything to go by, they don't want to see "dancers dancing" anywhere.

It was the most powerfully aspects of all the performers in the Harlem ballet that they did every one of their pieces with the same application and attention. It isn't their fault that white application and "presence" will help get over *Allegro*, *Allegro* and *Franz*; it won't be the main product in *Serenade* and *Four Temperaments*.

But it was the latter two works that were the greatest joy to me, and at the same time revealed the varying levels of technique and "give" in the company. Although the women's gestures are open and large, they aren't full. They look at times almost apathetic, lost in the polish and difficulties of their material. The men sometimes cover up their faults with bravado and personality.

Both things are absolutely necessary in a Balanchine ballet. Gesture must be big,

sure and strong, yet tilted and white personality required for it must always be the personality that the choreographer and the music call for. In *Al* the movement and the quirk that the dancer gives it that makes a Balanchine dancer "go" not the dancer "being" it.

*Serenade* was premiered in 1934, the first Ballet that Balanchine as Ballet master of the Ballet Russe created in America for American dancers. It is one of the last vestiges of "American" dance and the thin edge of the wedge for a tradition that has now become the major dance nation of the world. It was perhaps symbolic that it was one of the last works Mr B decided to set on the Dance Theatre of Harlem an entirely new company in the time.

*Serenade* has been called a sublime classicism extreme. Everything in the classical lexicon seemingly is there somewhere. Virtuoso technique is not called for, except in some demanding solo passages. More necessary is a lift in the torso (which the Harlem women had breathless beneath a soaring line) and the ability to sustain a phrase (which the Harlem women also didn't have). *Serenade* has little to do with steps and everything to do with dancing.

It never took me for the apologize "romantic" of *Allegro* and the hand calisthenics of *Manuscriptures* that followed it.

When I first saw Mitchell's *Merry-Anderson* at last year's Stars of World Ballet I couldn't help laughing out loud at its corny, screen-mindedness. A year's space hasn't changed my attitude to it one bit.

One doesn't get real dance or even real drama in *Manuscriptures*, one gets some amazingly difficult (and they're created to look amazingly difficult) postures and moments about Adam, Eve and the Serpent in the Garden of Eden.

The Serpent slithers down a rope because a rope is put there and that's what one usually does with a rope. He gives Eve a real apple to eat, the trouble starts and the choreography moves into overdrive, looking anguished and "hot."

One could call it pure nono, but Mr Mitchell has put so much "meaningfulness" into his choreography that one has to find a stronger word to describe the piece. I'd call it self-tortured bitch. But last year Mr Mitchell's movement vocabulary was inventive enough to sweep in falling into the mid-murking classsic-hard ambivalence of John Butler's after *Fever*.

If only the female dancers in the

Peppe Danzon's version of the big pas de deux from *Paquita* could have done something to save that work, but then we need to think it as well as any real exponent of ballet would. *Paquita* (at least the pas de deux because that is all there is left of the work) is best danced in a gala programme by the Bolshoi or Longjian Kun, they're the only ones that can face the jiggling masses and set questions of the piece to mean something in dance terms. The Harlem dancers are incomparable and put up with it that we couldn't live beyond the rigorous academic clutches of it to anything resembling a grand social audience. The Bolshoi costumes didn't help much either.

The major work of the winter season is my opinion, and one that we much didn't get to see had it not been for the indisposition of one of the dancers, scheduled to perform in Swan Lake Act 3 was Balanchine's 1946 masterpiece *The Four Temperaments*.

In terms of movement *The Four Temperaments* is unique. It would be easy to think of successors in Balanchine's repertoire style perhaps of Spuckler and Purcell but hard to name any forerunners with the possible exception of Apollo for the most part. *The Four Temperaments* is a movement vocabulary sprung fully formed from the brain of its

creator.

Borrowing its title from the astrologists, commissioning Hindmarch wrote at the same time Balanchine created a series of general tableaux using the animal markings of dragon, peacock and allegorical transformed into the dance possibilities of the Medieval diagnosis of the four bodily humours: peevish (melancholic), angry (cholerical), impulsive (phlegmatic) and confident (sanguine).

Out of this hard and hot driven came a cross-section of dance possibilities illustrating the moods through the motions, the humours through the dance patterns. It is this division of aspects placed throughout the formal patterns of 24 ensemble that I think made the dance. Figure 11 Harcum chose the ballerina to highlight her strengths in a work that is a real test of ability and technique. They achieved their aim in the women performances and that is what makes me value them far more than the rest of the apprentice-making free-for-all they chose to adopt.

The Five Fugue movements are unpredictable and fantastic in the way it starts in all the extreme possibilities of motion possible - the longest sharp stabbing steps, lifts at half height, turns in place, dropped steps, remonstrance and

exhortions and unrepented whipping. It is high pressured, high protein ballet that audience and critics could look off for an age if they would only last.

The ballet also has two unusual parts for the men and again these are at the reasons why. Macmillan chose it to show off his company, the neoclassical variation for instance, with its movement, soft and athletic or the playful, malleable, of the phlegmatics with all these unexpected turns and gyrations of the arms and legs. Phlegmatics especially gives a great lightness to the material of a dancer. I remember, for example, when the man suddenly finds himself whipping his hand around an uncontrolled angle or having all his uncontrolled hands and realising that this are not just hands on a stage they become upright. But what eventually makes the whole ballet great now and forever as well as a departure from previous forms is that it doesn't revolve in motion revealed or shown, it is an intellectual distillation of aspects of personality, partitioned in moments of architectural grandeur and surprise as shown in human form in the formal mathematics of spatial and bodily arrangement, palpable creation, personified as a parable.

It along with the (inherently unrefined) figure is what makes the Dance Theatre of Harlem a ballet company of importance it makes us look at dancers dancing forces us to see movement on its own terms and now, and thus opens the spread of our sensibilities that he wider.

When it came to the ensemble of men performing Robert North's *Four Gavottes* we were back on familiar territory. The piece was originally created for the white London Contemporary Dance Theatre and again I would presume that Mr Macmillan chose it because it was an ample opportunity to show off the men of the company seeing that *Paquita* had shown off the women.

*Four Gavottes* adds up to an animated Mr Universe contest with music. It seems like sending everything but its glorifying song in it was done so I suppose it would be boring at the extreme, but all the men could do very well that they made a palatable in a pleasing passing sort of way. It is not real dance of course just a specie gaudach of jolts, stottinges, gallops and contractions not making any sense in its own right but designed to expand, express and rouse as performers. When it starts you think it aims to get an audience applauding all male movement - a liberation of the dancer by the end you know what it means, applause.

Applause as what it gets, but the Dance Theatre of Harlem has got to go along way yet in developing an aesthetic that will make it valued as a dance company and not just a collection of dancers.



# Australian Ballet Report: China Tour

BY SUE DAVIDSON

After the problems in Korea had forced the cancellation of that leg of the tour, and with some additional help from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australia-China Council, the full complement of Australia's national ballet company was on its way to Peking on Saturday June 18, 1988.

The China Performing Company was the entrepreneurial body responsible for handling the visits of foreign companies to China and their superbly prepared schedule impressed everyone with its practical efficiency.

The premiere in the Tiananmen (Bridge of Heaven) Theatre on June 18 was received with rapturous praise. The Chinese were totally absorbed in what was going on in the action at all times, and discussed everything freely throughout the performance, pointing out things of particular interest to each other. The Australians had been warned about the custom in China (dating from the time when the Emperor used to come and go as will during performances of the Chinese Opera which lasts four to five hours), so the dancers weren't surprised. They had also been warned not to expect loud applause from the Chinese, so they were more than agreeably surprised when at the end of the performance the whole theatre erupted in a roar of approval!

The Australian Ballet's Music Director, Debbie Franks, went ahead of the rest of the company, in order to rehearse the orchestra. The recent visits of the Stuttgart and Boston Ballet companies were presented with taped music; in fact the only ballet company to present a season in China with live musicians was London Festival Ballet which travelled as own orchestra in 1979. Consequently there was great excitement among the Chinese musicians when it was announced that The Australian Ballet would use the China Opera and Ballet Orchestra in Peking and the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra in Shanghai. Both these orchestras were conducted by Debbie Franks, the first Westerner to conduct a Chinese orchestra. He speaks no Chinese, but he was able helped in translation by Sun Gangjin, an expert music interpreter. After a few initial problems with 3-4 musicians playing for clapping (as opposed to keeping to) all went well and the orchestra did the dances proud. In fact, the Shanghai Philharmonic asked

Debbie Franks for a concert arrangement of the *Don Quixote* score to include in their repertoire, they also asked her to recommend works of Australian composers to them for the same reason. Cultural exchange on the music level had been initiated.

Following its triumphant premiere in Peking, the company attended a performance given by students and graduates of the Peking Dance Institute, which has been in operation since 1956. The two hour programme included classical pas de deux, and national dances of China and several other countries. After the performance, principal artist Marilyn Rose and Kelvin Cox remained behind to give a three hour coaching lesson in the *Don Quixote* Act III pas de deux to the graduate students. The visitors were most impressed by the high standard achieved at a very early age in these dancer's careers. The Institute has two hundred students in residence — to get an idea of size and they take their secondary education concurrently with their dance training. A special feature is the seven hundred seal theatre where students present incense and with incense the classical and indigenous religions which forms part of their curriculum.

The Australian Ballet gave their performances of *Giselle* in Peking. Marilyn Rose and Kelvin Cox opened the season in the principal parts of *Romeo and Juliet*, as the running Lois Smith and David Baile took over, and Ann Jenner and Dale Baker led the company in the last release, watched by an audience of 11 million, which was the third performance in Peking.

One must have perceived them in Shanghai. (perhaps it was the TV performance from Peking) because when they arrived there, they found hundreds of people queuing in the hope of buying returned tickets for the coming three performances, and as they were walking to the auditorium, people began applauding them in the streets!

Inside the Municipal Auditorium, the packed house gave a reception to the performance the like of which had not been equalled in any of the dancers' memories, the ten minute pas de deux and variations in Act II proved a sensation and there was literally non-stop applause throughout. The Chinese are thrilled by leaps of technical virtuosity and the dancing of Rose and Cox that night gave them all they could have wished for. At the final curtain the entire audience sitting in the stalls section rushed forward to the orchestra pit and gave the company an ovation it will long remember. The morale of the dancers is at an all-time high; they gave performances in China that will long be remembered by all who saw them.

In Shanghai Marilyn Rose and Kelvin Cox again worked with students and graduates, this time from the Shanghai Institute, meanwhile Therese Power and Craig Phillips was teaching them a pas de deux from *Coppélia*, and Jeanne Blanche was working with others on the Pandang from *Don Quixote*. Everyone was busy, working together or watching each other and learning. The Chinese are very keen to learn and the company loved their simple, total, literate people with an apparently total capacity for humility and learning. Artistic Director Marilyn Jones marveled at one stage "It's certainly rewarding teaching dancers like this, but I think there is an awful lot we can learn here too!"

Meanwhile, and almost parallel with the China Tour, we are the star of the inaugural tour of The Dancers of The Australian Ballet. Their first season opened in Canberra, on May 21. An extension of The Australian Ballet, both in size and (therefore) activities, The Dancers Company is Marilyn Jones' baby. The idea had been mooted before, but by working together on it, she and Peter Baker, The Australian Ballet's Administrator, turned the idea into a reality this year.

The aims of The Dancers are manifold — they are to expand audiences by playing the major country cities of the Commonwealth, (80 percent in the other capital cities, works which hitherto have been staged only in Sydney and Melbourne); to bridge the gap of the overnight leap from Australian Ballet School graduate status to that of experienced artist within the ranks of The Australian Ballet; and (last, but not least), provide an entity within which Australian choreographers can, with adequate time at their disposal, develop their creative ability — in workshop and performance. (The first of these workshops is planned for October.)

The Dancers Company is a professional entity. It is headed by principal and solo artists of The Australian Ballet and the members of its corps are all graduates of The Australian Ballet School. Their repertoire for 1988 includes Giselle and a triple bill consisting of *Clown's Principe* Paul McMillan's *Las Hermanas* and Jim Ryker's *Sophomores*, in *D*. Judging from purely audience and critical reaction, The Dancers have proved more than equal to the challenge of the first two acts of their creation. On among the developments in their performances, both as individuals and as an ensemble, in the short time since The Dancers Company commenced this inaugural tour, one can see how effective the offshoot of the main company will be in the future, in ensuring that The Australian Ballet's standards in technique and artistry are kept at the highest level.

# OPERA

BY DAVID CRAVEN



## Katya, Rigoletto and Pilgrim's Progress

Despite the worst that Sydney's nasty winter climate could do, July was quite a month for the Australian Opera - quite a good month though, which could well have been quite spectacular given a spot more forbearance on the part of the fates.

*J. Morsedore*, whose opening I reviewed in these columns last month, went through a traumatic period when two of its four main characters fell ill, and another of the other openings of the month - a revival of *Rigoletto* and a new production of *Katya Kabanova* — was an unqualified success.

Yet it was clear even at opening that both productions were destined for a good deal better things once they had run in a little, having the sort of uncontrollable problem that beset *J. Morsedore*.

And so it proved, at least in the case of *Rigoletto*: within a couple of weeks of opening it had settled down thoroughly and became one of the most satisfying realizations of the great middle period Verdi operas I have ever seen.

For practically the whole month under review, in fact, those two Verdi operas monopolized the Opera Theatre, for Katya did not premiere until Monday, July 28, and I had the good fortune to attend both *J. Morsedore* and *Rigoletto* on the Saturday just before.

It was a very instructive and enjoyable Verdi matinée, that day throwing the two works as it did, into immediate comparison and focusing attention on the relative strengths and weaknesses of their current Australian Opera productions. By and large, though, both directors have done marvelously by the works entrusted to them: Peter Dennis' *J. Morsedore* brilliantly glances over the endurable vicissitudes of that piece, and John Copley's 1972 *Rigoletto*, which had already been run in quite thoroughly

over eight years of regular revivals, has held that time round from a good deal of attention and retching from the original producer himself.

In contrast, *J. Morsedore* is a piece that can send the ear into paroxysms of torture, well enough song, but which lies just about no depth at all worth the plumbing. Spectacularly sung, it can of course not only hold the stage but melt an audience, but never for a moment can it move an audience to tears, or project shivers of uplifting inspiration to lingle the spirit.

Given Jean Sutherland, Robert Altnan, Donald Smith and Clifford Gray in top form, on something approximating it, *J. Morsedore* was a marvel, despite of two of them for most of the night; as was the case the second time I saw it, the piece was virtually unable to hold the stage at all. It is



Raymond Myers in the ACT's *Rigoletto*. Photo: Dennis Craven

clearly not an open to instant, frequent revival for the simple reason that Verdi lavished nothing but taxes on it - social, that is, or just about no soul.

Copley's relish was evident at a great many points in the starry's revival of *Rigoletto*. The production now underscores more effectively than before several details of the libretto that tend to escape the notice of the vast majority of any predominantly English-speaking audience viewing the piece sung in Italian. The vital (in dramatic terms) appearance of Monterone in Act I, whose curse on Rigoletto sets the dramatic stage for the tragedy that is to develop, has been upgraded, this time round, from a cursory passing vignette to a downstage moment of

high drama — with Monterone stridently positioned between the Duke and Rigoletto so it can be made visually clear that his vapourments are levels against the one and, secondly, when he physically turns round against the other.

It is, of course, one of the great strengths of thoroughly ensemble companies such as the Australian Opera that they can afford to lavish singers of such quality as Heather Begg on her parts like Maddalena and Monterone (which was sung splendidly on this occasion by Bruce Martin); for both roles are not so the domain of the baritone and even — despite their brevity — have the potential to impress an audience socially.

There were a number of other points too, where Copley's robust page cloaks dividends. There was more convivial elegance in the brief formal dance sequences in the opening scene, and thus more contrast with the bare-chested wrestlers and the earthy community singing, on reiteration that otherwise dominates the action, and this year's wrestlers approached a good deal nearer the ideal of the male body, beautiful than their forebears.

In Act II, the nakedness of the countess is the teeth of Rigoletto's impotent concern for the virtue of his daughter was more pointed, and the division of Peter van der Stoel's Marullo as Rigoletto's gruntingly-clad keeper thus the overall dramatic effect of the scene, and in particular Rigoletto's violent outburst, Viola Ract of Courtes, was gently enhanced.

In historic terms, Raymond Myers' Rigoletto was as perfunctory as both of the performances I attended this season, but he was not in top form especially on opening night. By the second performance, a bit more than a fortnight later, not only had he put everyone else in the cast seemed to be in top form and the combined result was really quite memorable.

Jean Carden's Gilda was particularly ravishing this year, dramatically committed always but with a rare vocal softness that was not present before. The colonially sprightly of her Circassians were garrulous, she was the top dog off the boil on the basis of the echo of a high trill quite spell-binding.

And the post-delivery scene between Carden and Myers was very touching for its tender vocal appeal and for its visual impact — she in her nightie struggling valiantly to cover herself with a bedsheet, he thoroughly convincing as the distraught father trying to afford comfort where no comfort can be given.

Donald Nichols was also once again impressively expressive as Spazzaolo as one could wish for - singing with his headmost full-throated sonority, dominating the stage with his commanding presence when he glided out of the shadows to escort Rigoletto in Act I, and making gracious preparations for the master-to-come throughout most of Act II.

Amen Austin, a newcomer to this *Rigoletto* as the Duke of Mantua, was done up quite dashingly, black top and beard and all. He was absolutely convincing as the insatiable ruler and though his Questa è Quella was worryingly singing improved markedly as the evening progressed and he was coping very well indeed by the end. His desire to be the Duke of developing into a more satisfying Verdi tenor indeed. But introducing new costume led to a glancing visual bon-bon in Act II where the courtier was now presenting him in a different costume to the one the Duke is actually wearing.

On opening night Richard Bonynge started off Act I at such a breakneck pace one might have been pardoned for thinking he was trying to catch some train half an hour before the scheduled finishing time, but though quickly sorted down and ready he produced a breath-wrought reading of the score which revealed fully the incalculable wealth of its musical stores as compared with those of J. Strauss.

And everyone concerned gave of their best at both performances I saw, when quiet time settled round it was a thoroughly touching rendition of one of the great opera arias, particularly, due to the addition of the tragic, ethereal Heather Bogg's deep moan to the vocal mix.

The first production of *Kara Kabanova* was an undeniably musical triumph for conductor Mark Elder and the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra at opening, and a visual triumph for its set designer, Roger Butler, and to a lesser extent for its costume designer, Muriel Björnson. It was a more equivocal success in vocal and dramatic terms. Not that there was anything to complain of in producer David Pontney's general handling of the requirements of the piece or, indeed, of the casting, which produced moments in the event that were every bit as gaudily mouth-watering as they had promised to be on paper.

But words were often not comprehensible, even from such normally well-articulated performers as Marilyn Richardson and Robert Gurd. Partly this was no doubt a balance problem arising directly and inevitably from Janacek's very liberal orchestration, and partly, I suspect, a arose from the nature of Barbara's art which is appropriately stark and simple.



Kathleen Dennis (Kabaneva) and Ross Williams (Kashcheyev) in the ACT's *Kara Kabanova*. Photo: Graham Davis

and thus devoid of walls or other resonant surfaces to act as reflector boards for vocal sound. Rightly or wrongly, I got the impression that much of the sound was being dissipated in the upper reaches of the stage auditoria, and vocal focus was being undermined by excessive echo. I am sure things will improve as the season progresses.

With that reservation, this Kara was superbly cast and performed. Marilyn Richardson is absolutely right as the sole fully human character tragically trapped in a world otherwise peopled by twisted provincial characters of the worst sort, particularly her husband Tichka, an unloving caricature of a man played magnificently by Robert Gurd, and her thoughtless lover Boris, comically portrayed by Gregory Denyer.

Richardson radiated beauty, melancholy and womanly charm on her first entrance, effectively co-ordinated with the music as she appeared over the horizon for stage just as the orchestra played her lush, sunny signature tune, underscored at every turn, throughout the evening. The difference between her enlightenment and emotional humanity and the vacuousness of the characters who peopled the world around her.

The uncomplicated young lovers, Vanya and Varvara, were well portrayed by Ron Stevens and Kathleen Moore. Stevens perfectly cast in a role he can act merevolously and sing with just the right sound, she clearly on the brink of great things.

And a considerable personal triumph was scored on opening night by Homa Ranbeck in the title, a thoroughly unglamorous, role of Ticha's mother Kashcheyev. (Her role is of course much smaller than that of the title character and therefore Ranbeck's achievement was of distinctly more modest proportions than Richardson's.) Kashcheyev is an amoral person, bullying everyone from her son and his wife to her own lover Dolokh (played a little too tentatively by Neil Wannen-Swift). She is the epitome of unscrupulousness, the character who provides the source of Kara's fate but is totally oblivious to the dimensions of the human tragedy that is being enacted around her. While the Kashcheyev in Arsenyev she is a totally parched character, one in whom any audience would be hard put to find much to admire. It was a remarkable achievement of Ranbeck's performance that she could somehow provoke a certain admiration of her primitive integrity even despite her colossal bloody-mindedness.

Even on opening night, this Kara had a good many moments of elevating tension and musical beauty, once it has been given the opportunity to mature fully it will no doubt be one of the Australian Opera's most memorable achievements all round.

Final mention must be made also of the Australian premiere season of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Polyphemus*, presented by Canberra Opera with a considerable amount of varied support from the Canberra community at large - at the Canberra School of Music in mid-July. This work, based of course on John Bayley's *The Polyphemus*, with a considerable amount of varied support from the Canberra community at large - at the Canberra School of Music in mid-July. This work, based of course on John Bayley's *The Polyphemus*, has never managed to hold the stage, lacking really in the way of dramatic incident and having only one real character, the pilgrim himself, a figure more aptly described as an oratorio or cantata, or even a symphony, with choral supplements.

The performance itself was an unequivocal triumph for Canberra baritone Colin Shan, who was required to be on stage almost all night, and conductor Donald Maclellan and the scrupulous orchestra of quite sufficient quality to cope with the truly symphonic demands of the score. Brian Bell's production was effective within the limits imposed by the capabilities of the opera company's choristers augmented by a children's choir and the voices of the Canberra Choral Society.

All round it was a worthy effort which passed the musical norm of the piece but did not demonstrate that the judgment of history has been wrong in neglecting this a work of the musical theatre.

**DAVID CHALKE** is Editor of *Opera Australia*.

# THEATRE / ACT



VICKI LEE  
NATIONAL CAPITAL  
THEATRE

## Visually static

### FACTIONS MESH

by Marguerite Wells

Dancer in Stephen Arnell's Australian Theatre Workshop's *The Capitalist Platform*. Opened July 23, 1980.

Music: Warwick Baxter. Sets: Michael John Peden. Production Manager: David Black. Art: Peter Hines and Eric Peggott. Photo: Alan Wilkinson. Setting Fee: Shipton Building 1st Night: Minimum dancer.

Cast: Anna: Tamara Rose, Karen: John Callaghan, Elizabeth: June Hayes, Linda: Terry Bremner, Ursula: Thea Astley, Muriel: Vicki Lee, Neddy: Margaret De Souza. Extras: Lucy.

Length: 1 hr. 45 min. (including interval). Tickets: \$10-\$12.

Director: Don MacKenzie. Design: Colin Williams. Lighting: Paul Hansen. Stage: Philip Black. Stagehands: Alan Clepple.

The Australian Theatre Workshop, mainly in the magnetic person of Ralph Wilson, has been around in Canberra for a long time, lighting up the dark depths of Chifley Street Hall every couple of months with interesting productions. Highly unavailable of course! Interesting Play with Blood Action. This is a combination almost unknown anywhere else in Canberra. The telephone call Ralph Wilson's desk is half-line is the best actors and Warwick Baxter has joined the hot-line network and brought in a few others of his own who have developed their acting skills as he developed his directing.

Pet Quinn is one of these actors. His magnificent performance in *The Playboy* had more than earned him his place on the Playhouse stage, now that the Arts Council has extended its sponsorship from Part-time Theatre to ATW. There have been misunderstandings and babbings. In some ways, to the effect that it is a disgrace that our National Capital hasn't got a full-time professional theatre company to grace the boards of the aptly named Playhouse so over the past year or so a number of groups have been sponsored to perform in the otherwise prohibitively expensive Canberra Theatre Centre. It started off

with Fortune Theatre with a production of the Catherine McAuley Farce at luncheon, then moved gradually into the Playhouse every now and then "whole shows companies" understanding?

Warwick Baxter's production of *Factions* is one of the most impressive of these "productions" we've seen with an excellent cast and a gripping play. If you don't know anything about the Russian Revolution and like me have always thought of Lenin and Stalin as being pretty much the same person, the first half of the play is a great mystery thriller, and you sit on the edge of your seat frantically trying to sift through the drifts of political information for a clue.

Eventually it boils down to the simple proposition that Anna is a member of a faction within the Communist Party, opposed to Stalin and that's who she goes in favour of her life and let's just say it becomes a communist revolution. All good clear Agatha Christie. They having worked all that out you get on back relax and watch Anna and Karen do what are faultless performances as usual from John Callaghan, starkly, stoic to their death.

And very English it was too, with a drab painted set and drab, earnest ladies smartly and severely clad. Only Karen, crossbow-woman, was a sort of social agent returning from a murderous mission in Britain has acquired a taste for lower, peppierons and the soft life and a very well-cut jacket.

One of the keys of this sort of political play is that the characters tend to do an awful lot of talking while the torture scenes have our well-honed indeed moving the actors about the stage is not perhaps one of Warwick Baxter's greatest strengths. Through the first tableau with the two women, girls in the ready, poised to fight and die in the blood-red spotlight, was unconvincing.

The set fragmented the action somewhat, the actors seemed to be entering themselves onto the stage rather than entering with certain names and boarding boats upright right. Several police officer spotlight centre an empty room (the Anna-Karen love nest), upright left and an anonymous area backstage serving as station platforms, bars, art galleries and various deserted streets the action tended to seem absurdly boxed in at times. Still a very satisfying piece of theatre, not the least because this is one of the most successful of the auditions for auditions for a theatre company for our National Capital.

Riding between Sydney and Melbourne and yet being part of neither of them our National Capital plays best in a large number of contexts, looking for neutral ground. One of the more recent of these, "Australia in the Malibogal Highways", brought the Sulimnaak Theatre Company here from their Sydney home where they are affiliated with the Ensemble. The play, which is a multi-layered 14-venue theatre piece, "to play about prejudice, alienation and communication - a lasting good very cold with humour and hope". The playwright Graham Potts has an extreme facility with extorting dialogue, and while this is again a rather small, same play, there is plenty of extended spacing, with a cranking Australian subbie bureaucrat faced with a Greek submissus considerably braver and smarter than he and a raw worker, a Turkish woman, to help them lift a work quota that has been raised impossibly high. After some trauma they come to a compromise and march off into the sunset to continue the liaison, management or comradeship together. Thus hope and humour!

### AUSTRALIA COUNCIL LITERATURE AND THEATRE BOARDS

## PLAYWRIGHTS-IN- RESIDENCE

The Literature Board invites joint applications from playwrights and theatre companies (TBC) and professionals for assistance under the playwright-in-residence program for 1981.

Subsidies are usually determined on a 3/4 basis and range for a period of one to six months.

Guidelines and application forms may be obtained by writing to the Literature Board, PO Box 302, North Sydney 2000.

Closing date for applications which must be made on the appropriate forms is 30 September 1980. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

# THEATRE/NSW



PLAYERS  
LUCY MAUNDER,  
BELL'S EDITOR

## With panache...

### CYNANO DE BERLIMAC

by Robert Page

*Cynano de Berlimac* by Edmond Rostand. Sydney Theatre Company. Theatre Studio, Sydney. With original cast, 24 Sept.

**Director:** Richard Wherrett. **Translations:** James Norman Webb. **Scenic design:** George Fawcett. **Dramaturgy:** Linda Cappell. **Lighting:** John Whitley. **Urging:** Ruth Farnham.

*Caretaker:* John Bell. *Robert:* Helen Morse. *Laure:* Sophie Rameau. *Le Marin:* Andrew McPherson. *Madame Géorgine:* Barbara Breening. *Pierre/Father:* Andrew Ridge. *Domènec:* John Blaikie. *Ramon van Maerlant:* Steven Campion. *François Bérengier:* Alan Ford. *Philippe/Father:* John Kelly. *Helen:* Helen Lyle. *John Morris:* Bill McIndoe. *Peter Whifford:* Ian Rumsey. *Reynard Banks:* Vaughan Williams. *Alain Balon:* Alistair MacKenzie.

Rostand's most well known play has delighted French, English and American audiences since it was written in 1887, but has not, until now, world seems had a professional production in Australia. Richard Wherrett, the Sydney Theatre Company, a crop of some of our best actors (including John Bell) the play's role have not only recited that has presented a drama of unquestionable import.

The play itself has always been a marvelous anomaly: an eccentric tour de force, a dramatic opera built tinged with tragedy, for when written it was an attempt at reviving the old romantic drama in the face of naturalism's uncompromising treatment of the universality of society and symbolism's moral plays of subjective vision and imaginative feeling.

Despite its off-lying position in the history of drama, its well-built structure, engaging if not transporting language vigorous sense of plot. Film, Modernism, much-breaking 17th century audience and above all the brazen central role have assured its place in theatre repertoires of the Western world. From Coquelin, for whom it was written, on, a succession of famous actors have donned that transfixing "French look" of a mask.

And so to John Bell. If England can be



SOPHIE RAMEAU IN COSTUME

charmed to have found its Cynano in Ralph Richardson (though Tyrone was that thought he "gave a tremendous performance of withering in Englishman will ever play Rostand's *Cynano*") then what have found out in Bell I suspect his performance would have been rated as much the same way by Tyrone (had he seen it) and not sadly, shed hot off the mortal coil, for he wanted a "staggered assemblage of shapes" to "dance about the poetry of a man" who is "a monstrous giant, a commanding scaramouche" and "a grim jester". But as a programme note points out, the role allows a great deal of latitude in a good sense. And Bell is one of the best, perhaps the finest, actors in this country today.

When dealing with a character who we are to believe, truly amateur (almost), pretended equals with the men in falstaffian, who makes love because of his impossible facial deformity, through a staged travel with rancour and looks, constantly lost his balance (and was totally struck down for an Alcanian moment in his political writings), we may expect a staggering here larger than life faced with testifying sentent. And so he has often been portrayed.

Bell, faced with this night have given us all overblown. Armed with a heart of gold but no big talk, he bargains with Falstaff's barmy and his brazen, passing off his deeds as night as tomorrow, as it will be happens to have. He tempestfully roasts the heart of a goat he replaces swaps various with true, (believe, he can't make the move). But rather it underscores the traps of deformity that flesh can be heir to, a tragedy that can crush its hollowed depths, perceptions, and broaden his understanding of what it means to be alive.

Beyond that he upstages parcels. For this *Cynano* does not lack stature nor presence nor brio, nor wit that can stir a laugh from the belly or be as light as a whisper. Bell is magnificently intoxicatingly, engagingly, sternly, sweetly and moreover robustly human.

It is a strength which has caught almost the whole company. From the no-prance Dr Grange at Roger Rameau through Andrew McPherson's wonderfully unhandsome and severe yet vacuous Christian and Helen Morse as the existing self-sabotaging lemons. Rameau down to one of the smallest names roles.

Richard Wherrett's unswerving individual and imaginative vision is clear throughout his ability to draw performances is apparent among all the principals. His ability to create richly charged group scenes rivals the famed Duke of Saxe Meissen.

Wherrett has filled his company with the best actors available - such names as Brandon Banks in minor roles and an equally strong production team. Luisa Saura has provided a fast yet fluid translation - perhaps itself showing some regard of the poetry of the original. Leonardi's costumes are breathtakingly diverse. Even Farnham's lighting paints in the ambience and, with some reservations John Snodgrass' set is resolved into a lucidly, oppressiveistic evocation of each location.

It has been said that the Sydney Theatre Company was artificially created, that art does not spring up to the tune of subsidy and government decree, yet it has sprung into existence fully formed. *Cynano* looks like the work of a company with decades of maturity behind it. One of the responsibilities it has is to mount the classics superbly - as record on the magnus is so far impossible but the classics are the acid test and it has passed the one with flying colours with an orchestral plumes with panache.

# Comic and poignant

BARRY O'CONOR

By Barry O'Connor

*BACKYARD SCANDAL* (1993). Directed by James Balada. Screenplay: Dennis Lehane. Music: Michael Kamen. Cast: Dennis Hopper, Stephen Collins, John Goodman, Michelle Pfeiffer, Michael Richards.

Rating: R. Rating: R. Running time: 100 mins. Director: James Balada. Screenplay: Dennis Lehane. Music: Michael Kamen. Cast: Dennis Hopper, Stephen Collins, John Goodman, Michelle Pfeiffer, Michael Richards.

MPAA rating: R.

*Scandal in the Backyard* (1993). Directed by James Balada. Screenplay: Dennis Lehane. Music: Michael Kamen. Cast: Dennis Hopper, Stephen Collins, John Goodman, Michelle Pfeiffer, Michael Richards.

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*Scandal in the Backyard* (1993). Directed by James Balada. Screenplay: Dennis Lehane. Music: Michael Kamen. Cast: Dennis Hopper, Stephen Collins, John Goodman, Michelle Pfeiffer, Michael Richards.

MPAA rating: R.

*Backyard*, a first play by James Balada comes to the Second Storyers from the recent Playwrights' Conference in Canberra. The play is set in North Queensland in his latitudes, which are best known to the playwright.

1986 seems to have little to do with what happens in the play. Certainly none of the things in Craig McLachlan's headlined programme piece occurred until after way into the script. The one exception is the cross-dress, thanks perhaps to designer Stephen Collins.

Balada's foul writing is everywhere and nowhere. It's an alternately powerful and comic part of pure malum. It's about people stuck in their environment about the class/capitalist, the impulsive glib of the backyard. The backyard is a state of mind which is made concrete by occupying the downstairs space in chicken wire.

Brian Brown's *Pencils* is a cock with two hens to rule his wife and her sister (superbly played by Isla McGregor and Michelle Pfeiffer respectively). Aghastness. Peter Pan. Pencils' mind stopped at three, looking into a mangled raving laugh has his pens went on growing, becoming a 22 side with Pencils position pigeons and parrots — anything which runs to 100 the coop. Pencils hates everybody, spreading his great charm liberally, scoring points off boys and terrorising workmates. Two people do escape Pencils' note and snicker, David Anspaugh superbly observed infatuated Sandshoeless Jean Syringa. But Missie lookable leers around as Netties, waiting to bring Pencils down. But the female God Sandshoeboots believes in choices to work through another agent. Dorothy the



BRUCE BROWN (as Dennis Hopper) in *Backyard*. Photo: Michael Long

reunited Albertine (Isla) is the future of it.

The play is well scripted and the production lucid and tightly directed by Dennis Lehane. The set consists of a bar, a fridge and a sheet, all half stripped and shaved together. I wondered at reclining chess pieces throughout the audience, à la Grotowski's *Ramkarniworld* have had better. The harsh light of the revolving episodes might have worked better as part of the normal lighting, except of course in the case of the final shooting.

Michael is as ridiculous as a postman thrusting in diamonoid cones and pentagon spikes.

Brian O'Halloran's *Scandal* is late-night late-long omnibus show, which displays Max Collier at his acme best.

Scandal arrives late for his lecture on Harry Kendall and never really manages to get an audience in alone to take him the road. Popping pills and buttons, says words and left handing out the strong Band-Aids and knocking over the posted collage. Scandal takes on his audience of peers — no students here, they're much easier in full paranoid flight.

This is not James' birth and very moving monologue, with the latter man winning through as we see Scandal's fortune parallel or ahead those of his chosen subject.

It's more *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging*, with perhaps more room for improvisation which Collier takes advantage of under Neil Armfield's direction. Each night a member of the audience is singled out to play the victim of the plot — Professor Langley, citizen of Kendall and mentor of Scandal. At the promise I was bright and made no foul strengths known as the ensuing fight found its mark.

## Pace and vigour

THE COWMAN

By Barry O'Connor

REVIEWED: staged from William S. Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch*. Directed by Bill Prichard. Lighting: Bruce Walker. Stage Manager: Brian McAllister.

Cast: Dennis Hopper, Michelle Pfeiffer, Michael Richards, David Anspaugh, Michael Richards, Dennis Lehane, Bruce Walker, Bill Prichard, Brian McAllister. Production design: John Christian. Set: Paul D. Strode. Lighting: Bruce Walker. Sound: Michael Richards. Music: Dennis Lehane. Stage Manager: Brian McAllister. John Christian, Michael Richards, Dennis Lehane, Bruce Walker, Bill Prichard, Brian McAllister. MPAA: R-Rated. Running time: 100 mins. Rating: R.

Wollongong and Australia have a new professional company. Theatre South. Their inaugural production is *The Cowman*, a clever and witty adaptation of William S. Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch*.

The religious satire in the original has been played down, obviously, but adapter Maureen Scott has managed to find an appropriate outlet for Mallock's migrating homosexual (John Warwick) in the rich pastoralland of Jutland in 1899. An oligarchy belting the original is tarnished by Bill Prichard's designs. Truly magnificent, they make hideous Albert Tarrach's greed and scheming, and then are a delight to look at.

Dennis Hopper is a fine company of actors with pace and vigour. The brawling, the snarling, the cool and the cringing they all orchestrated in their different rhythms into a harmonious production.

This was an excellent production.

# In a word — excellent

**THE DIVIDED**

By Anthony Baschay

THE DIVIDED is a play which seems to have been designed to fit into most theatre repertoires. It is a good dramatic work, with clear lines, simple language, direct action and Manageable scenes. The two Michael Long plays I have seen — *The Divided*, Michael Long's first, and *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller's second — are both excellent. Both are plays of social comment, with humour throughout though there is the figure of Khamon set apart and almost countercurrent with lamentations. These moral resources of ringing with lament reach beyond the particular play for a series. After this production will be the final chapter in one of the most remarkable and important episodes in Australian theatre.

Since 1966 the NIDA Arts Street productions have given us a general idea of the genesis of such works as *The Legend of King O'Malley*, *Our Poms* and the *Divided* — rough-hewn but with excellence in treating world themes like *Mother Courage* or *Honesty for Goodness' Sake*. In recent decades directors and theatrical men who have moved from here into general circulation and leadership in the theatre community can wonder how such inventiveness, thorough and persistent, can emerge from so limited a space and financial resources. But again we must remember that ventures have emerged from such restrictions in this country. There must be pay for the name to a larger, more valuable venue of the other *Latins*, yet lament for the cessation of the Arts Street tradition.

This production is full-researched and thoroughly detailed. It is explosive and intense in setting a large tapestry of Hasidic community life as the backdrop for a love story that involves the same community interest only in so much life but in its most severe and even its sinned private ways. There are to be fair some gaps in the range and present capacities of some of the players but no person there is to be pedantic when acting, singing, dancing,

costumes, and set design coalesce into such splendid units.

The *Divided* is probably the Toldot drama of the century and it is a long exercise testing the local audience. Its history is almost as ancient as its subject matter. I heard play of Solomon Ansky, it was written in 1914 and submitted to the Moscow Art Theatre and Stanislavsky. The master declined production but his assistant Yakubson, produced it in 1923 with the result, learned Jacobs Habens, compared, and it remained a standard of repertory for the next forty-five years, long after the company had left the Shulman stage to become the National Theatre of Israel. It has despite its exotic dealing with universal interests that are classic and has been adapted many ways. Indeed it saw several last night performances at Sydney earlier this year as a two-hander from Miriam Goldschmidt and Bruce Myers (Peter Brook's C.R.O.) adapted by Myers.

The *Divided* is set in a small southern European community. Aviva herself a specialist in Jewish folklore. She returns



Aviva (Doris Ward) and Haim (Robert Frank) in *The Divided*.

around the love story many signs of Hasidic life. We have a people characterised by fervent emotion, by enthusiasm, by stories which have profound spiritual meaning even if that is very subjective matter. A woman whose daughter is dying is a matter of some elemental power to be followed by such conventional brags, luggages, appearing like disembodied souls in the soul, are led away before a wedding and dance with and give up the bride to be — both a statement of satire and darkly atmospheric before Khamon's appearance after his death.

We have a community that looks in speeches, etc., at its rabbinical leaders for charitable guidance — a spiritual wisdom that cannot spend time for the leader's own

enrichments and self-delusions. On a sacred Sabbath trial, passing temporal and external in its way, more gradually, torturing than are produced across tabloids. All of the signatures are characterised by a warmth towards the people, though moments of anger do not lose us without insight and continue. I, for one, found the humor to work in this direction.

But above all we have the Khamon — love love story. A broken oath by one rabbi reflects actual desire on his daughter and the other father's son. Reification is heavy and at moments torturing in spiritual consequences. It might be, as some audience remarked, a *Yiddish Romeo and Juliet* but the analogous would be suspended. The love is in temporal organisms, not at a distant lover's look — problematic, over later's words:

But following Khamon's death, love, loss, death, ritual and spiritual and its consequences settle hard at the moment. Indeed the play's second act leaves the easy part of the love and here moves towards its real tragic sense. It affirms life but does not do deep exploration of pain and grief. Is not so much a question that the love of Khamon and Aviva does not compare as audience can physical experience as in Romeo and Juliet. Rather the breaking, Khamon's use of *Kabbala* for an odd mixture of magnificence and rage to assert his love, one becomes the instrument for profound spiritual insight.

Back to洪on? Khamon was a superbly efficient and haunted study of sexual and spiritual alienation, a brooding figure not so much the object of sympathy, but a presence that permeated the people and languished over the atmosphere of the second act. Yasmine Gaunt as Leya mastered the demands of a woman here drawn to and preserved in the flesh. No easy task to realize the vocal range required and avoid histrionics during exertions.

I found much in Mervyn Brind's *Messiah* and Barry Lovett's *Sender* though both had moments unequal to cast with the full strength of character. Désiré Bussières' *Isaac* was a masterly study of big-heated maternal love, racing between past sorrow and confusion in wonderful, suppressed moments. His singing added considerable stature to the production.

And then, of course, Barry Otto. His *Aviel* dissolved between the demands of spiritual leadership and private, tortured self-delusion, was the grand touch. Otto entering the play early in the second act brought all the skill and inspiration needed to lift the work to its heights. As *Aviel* he was solid black — serene yet ever present tension, gave much distinction to the text. In a word, excellent.

# THEATRE / QLD



## Excruciating naturalism

### LET'S TWIST AGAIN

by Veronica Kelly

*Let's Twist Again* by Bob George. La Boite Theatre, Brisbane Qld. Opened July 17. Had  
Direction: Bruce Mernagh. Lighting: Sharks Williamson. Stage Manager: Michael Murray.  
Cast: Lee Darnell, Marianne Laine, Gillian Tyrrell, Joanne Hetherington, Caroline Potts, Danielle Forni, Pamela Charles, Kelly Purdy, John Brumfitt, Bruce Mernagh (Prod. Dir.).

Fathers hoping to revive a glorious page of colourful nostalgia were in for a far from pleasant shock with *Let's Twist Again*, the latest in La Boite's Australian play season. Such transurable bits of the past appear as any EH Holden seats and the Mexican Hat Dance, but serve little cogent purpose. Not that there isn't potential gold to be mined from nostalgia or from assessing the times, but this script appears so confused in its basic focus that little of value

emerges other than a lengthly patch of generally excruciating naturalism from which emerges with startling abruptness a ponderous piece of resolution about, I think, the desire for eternal youth.

The excruciating naturalism has as its scenario a 1975 reunion in an RSL hall amongst old acquaintances - one could not say friends - after fifteen years separation. John, the chief organiser of the reunion, is a rather grizzledly well-observed specimen of a particular brand of Australian male infatuation, egoism and general renovation enthusiasm, but once this established life development occurs except for a belated attempt to extend the character towards a symbolic purpose, of which more later. As the couples line up the natural and interrogative aggression continues, and is evidently if not in variation, stuck throughout. "Shut up you bitch" would be a fair example of a thematic shout emerging from dialogue.

The reason behind the reunion turns out to be the fifteenth anniversary of John's first encounter with Jean, now married to a mercenary insurance salesman - in this very hall, or rather in a car outside, during themodity number. John reluctantly connotes that opinion to the (female?) letter and gives him the bad news: "You're old. We're all old." Whereupon the play takes off for that old Australian ritual-and-games country, the only authentic bit of status nostalgia the right precede for this viewer.

Violence erupts! John goes nuts and tries to intentionally re-create a young girl's a-

pile of chairs so that she may keep forever her youth. His wife catches him playing with matches and nags like blues; he tells her, various "you shall not grow old as we that are left grow old"; and focuses on a spotlight and a stylized impasse. (Eng.) All in vain in my opinion, as patently the chief clicker has already attained eternal youth through his own arrested mental development somewhere between the playboy and the macho-mom.

The author's programme notes suggest a potential perspective for assessing the play's purpose. At the time of its writing in 1975, "youthfulness seems to reflect a culture that had suddenly lost confidence in itself and in the future, and was having to refer backwards all the time for its inspiration. That lack of confidence still with us." It's not difficult to guess at specific events in 1975 that made the clock go backwards, but if the RSL hall setting of the play is supposed to recall that particular Australia Day it is a remote point of relevance to which the play itself pays little attention.

The allegory, if one that compensates on the psycho-social battlefield, an arena in which usages of the order of Williamson have been used and felt their mark. Many evident themes are implicit in the initial action, the little-lap, whipping and cheating which passes for "leadership", or sexual/sexual hostility, and other abuses could have developed as a valid metaphor for the sanguine psychopathism. However when John goes on his Mad Doctor repression campaign while it is at least logical from what has gone on that the norms be women the eternal youth theme, materially and leadership stated, a distractingly extraneous and forced.

Of the generally inexperienced cast Bruce Mernagh is memorably revolting as the loudmouth mental images, and it is entirely the script's fault that he must play the sort of role that makes the audience confound actor and character in one vast chandras avastan. The rest of the characters are less than one-dimensional, and Sean McC's direction does its best to subdue physical for the non-forgetting dramatic energy La Boite's wonderful idea of an Australian play season though why not make it a permanent policy? - does show that not every local script is successful. The enterprise which brought us the wonderful *Round the Twist* Season (as also inexplicably knock out farce like *Let's Twist Again*) may be a contradiction inherent in the present policy, but I can't think it is unavoidable.



John Williamson (Bruce Mernagh) and Gillian Tyrrell (Marianne Laine) in *Let's Twist Again*. Photo: Doug Wilson

# Vital and Theatrical

## THE TEMPEST

by Elisabeth Perkins

The Tempest by William Shakespeare. Théâtre de la Ville and Tous les Jeux Theatre Company. Tous les Jeux Théâtre Quai. Opened July 3, 1988. Director: Bryan Nissen. Design: Bryan Nissen, Natalie Sibson. Stage Manager: Doug Collyer. Lighting: Ruth Burrows. Costumes: Robby Nottingham. Music: Composer: Judith Anderson. Special Effects: John Balata. Set Music: Carl Stroop. Cast: Alonso (Ron Hamilton); Sebastian (Peter Kyle); Ferdinand (John Beaufort); Caliban (Michael Weston); Prospero (Michael Williamson); Ariel (Steve Macmillan); Stephano (Steve Channing); Gonzalo (David Baker); Antonio (Alan Carter); Prospero's infant son (Mariana); Judith Anderson; Ariel (Tina Turner); Caliban (Chris Bell); Prospero (Bill Williamson); Stephano (Mike Mazzatorta).

Bryan Nissen's production of *The Tempest* with the Théâtre de la Ville and Tous les Jeux Theatre Company and amateur actors was another venture into community theatre that pleased those bored with traditional bardolatry but did not offend Shakespeare purists.

The open stage design made the move from the outdoor Fair to the play inside a natural interaction, and a musical cacophony of movement, music and acting controlled most aspects of the production. It was a young people's play, with the older generation like Prospero himself, keeping benevolent control. The young musicians on floating platforms, and the youthful troupe of actors running all over the stage appeared both free and disciplined. Ariel played by twelve year old Timothy Draper was a delicate, limber spirit, handling lines with intelligence and feeling, and moving nimbly and gracefully.

Ariel's brief transformations into Sebastian and Harriet were probably intended to show that what Ariel was in Shakespeare's pretentious, showy popular mythos was to our. If Ariel had been replaced by a muscular adult for these changes the idea might have gained theatrical poise, but the effect did not come off because Timothy Draper's Ariel was, frankly, a more imaginative creation than Missus Super and Harriet.

The shapes and spirits coagured up by Prospero were of a different order, and it would be hard to find a production where they were more creatively or daringly conceived. Ceres was played by Sandy Yoon on cathears, looking and singing magnificently, the very image of fertility. Juno descended in a canopy and was played by soul singer Steven Malamont with that rare and very successful blending of

Shakespeare and the twentieth century. It is charming, perhaps, but inaccurate to say that these recreations were more vital and theatrical than the sketchy scenes in the 1979 BBC Television production of *The Tempest*.

With a few exceptions, the other roles were also taken by very young players, and while the older people were adequate, Judith Anderson as Miranda and the comparatively inexperienced John Beaufort as Ferdinand were graceful and appealing with a freshness that owed much to their being 18 to their youth. Alan Cooke and Peter Hyde gave first performances as Antonio and Sebastian, and Chris Hill, another younger player, showed promise as Caliban whose deformity was achieved with striking simplicity by pain and movement.

Robert Arthur is an excellent and versatile actor, but his youthful voice and appearance did not quite meet the demands that Shakespeare makes on Prospero to control the whole play. Prospero is an ageing role and needs behind it a suggestion of great wisdom and suffering.



Sandy Yoon (Ceres) in the celebrated opening of Tous les Jeux' *The Tempest*

which was not felt in the first night performance. The brief scene where Ariel's play for Alonso and Gonzalo moves Prospero to mitigation was one of the play's most dramatic moments and most of the audience would have given depth to Prospero's part. Yet Prospero did command the performance in a very real way, and his Epilogue, like the whole production, had an austere lucidity which "ties all facts".

The one disappointment in this production was that the grace and music of the actors' movements did not pass into

their spoken lines. Articulation was almost perfect, an achievement in itself, but in a production where there was so much flowing movement, the speech tried dutifully and intelligently on the ground. We certainly got the meaning of the lines but we missed the experience.

But when the challenge of this kind of production is granted, with a professional company guiding dozens of young and amateur actors to an imaginative and coherent performance the result must be considered very satisfying theatre.

## If it's Williamson it must be good

### TRAVELLING NORTH

by Sylvia da Costa-Reque

It's David Williamson must be good. That's the way a lot of people think at the moment and with *Travelling North* they are right.

The Queensland Theatre Company's production of the play at Brisbane's QTC Theater left nothing in any doubt that if you put on a Williamson you get full houses. And if you put on a Williamson play starring such seasoned and good performers as John Bruce and Ross Graham, the husband and wife pair from television's *Curtain*, however old-time radio comic Wilfrid Perrett and David Cawthron, you don't just get full houses, they are veritably packed.

The play is well-known, the mature couple who are supposed to know better who go off up north together to live in an leaving their respective families behind with nobody to do the babysitting.

It isn't a pretentious play. It doesn't carry hidden mysterious messages of drugs and sex. Ordinary people doing ordinary things that people can relate to as if they were watching at mirror images. The son of thug Williamson is so good at.

Director Alan Edwards, who must be pleased with the box office success of recent QTC productions, got first class performances from all concerned. John Bruce and his two babbling daughters really looked as though they were related.

There were some criticisms. Like why did Ross Graham age so much and so quickly, when I saw aged not at all? It is true what they say about women being the stronger sex! And why did the sun have to look so tropical? It looked more like darkened Sumatra than somewhere just north of Byron Bay.

These quibbles aside, *Travelling North* travelled up north very well indeed.

# **THEATRE / SA**

## A Delight; and top-heavy

#### **ON THE WALLABY DUNE FOR THE MONEY**

By Michael Blotter/Sacramento Bee

*Close for the Month by Bell Auto Stage Company  
atmosphere SA, Opened July 1920  
Dorothy Chapman, John DeLancey, Pauline Starke,  
Bruce Webster, Max Baer, Eddie Cantrell, Eddie  
Lester  
Cast: Jack, John North, Samson, Ben Taylor, John Davis,  
D. C. Thompson, Eddie, Kathleen Holden, George Abbott,  
Lorraine Day, Maurice Moskowitz, Eddie, Paul Webster,  
Percy Helms.*

Alan Seymour's *The Fleet* did nothing to advance the cause of the new troupe at the State Theatre Company but Nig Farquhar's depression "fabulous", not "indiscreet" show. On The Whelk does more in half an hour for both his own and the Company's reputation than any production I can recall over the past four years, with the possible exception of *The Servant of Two Masters*. Too often in the past, I have deplored either seeing the State Theatre Company choose plays like what they have to say rather than how they might look, and of watching a group of talented actors working together to produce theatre that arrests, entertains and transports an audience with a connection between the stage and the events outside. On The Whelk does all this and more, both an icon and performance it could hold its head up in any company.

To get the swelling out of the way at the outset the beginning and the end seem rather pedestrian. Only by the second scene does the performer-audience dynamic begin to evolve. And although the function of the ending will not jump forward into the present and its drawing of parallels between them now is clearly apparent, the theatrical realization is rather bland. Sending up the show to the strains of "Side by Side" — even though there is a faint, almost imperceptible, link — would have been more effective.

most signs for the west of the captain "with whom?" in his horse. For when it's worth, I'd have left either a blinder solo number or a bigger more emphatic and political one could have served as a single finale.

But in between, there was almost an enthrall of excitement, superb singing, marvellous comic turns, clever acting and clever numbers and a whole series of splendid cameos from everyone involved. What one has constantly marvelled at the STC's past performances was goodness "to see, atmosphere, vigour, versatility and strong ensemble".

Pace the old cliché about it being unfair to single anybody out, gold bullion and skilled magpies like Bruno Grötsch, John Saunders, Edwin Hodgman and Wayne Jarrett. The first for some nicely differentiated pictures of panopmy and power at the top, the second for some outstanding comedy and song routines (the third for his distinctive (but not over-familiar) display of closely-observed irony, and the last for a sympathetic and foreshadowing trading of a sale that could have easily been a disastrous one. As for the others, Marvo, Bratva, Archibald and any company that can boast the singing voices of this group is to be avoided. The only year (or name) I can't come up with is "Parade Ponson" (my entry in the second set), where one finds that a reader has got the most

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This apart the musical side of things, under the direction of Lester Hinspon, was a delight. Faster step-quarters, main-song-and-dance numbers, solo spots - all using either songs from the period or others specially written by the director showed the performers equally at home. Personal favourites? "Garry O' with its clever balanced staging of radio singers on the right and the harp-on-the-left, "Blue Law" and "Reservoir Street".

Richard Robert's design was functional and effective: the comedy routines were heralded by flannel-clad carriers hovering behind the performers; the radio station's numbers by a track-and-slide motif of a Yatties radio stage; the family scenes — focusing on the history of the O'Brien family — by a setup with table and chairs and a classic school. And the whole area was enclosed by a square of corrugated iron walls, broken by side entrances. Simple, expressive and totally appropriate. High points of the evening? A delicious tableau of South Australia's 100th anniversary in 1936, featuring a meagre slab of white meat between two top complete with gleaming belly; and sundry other walk-on cosy dispensing themselves as gurus of wheat sheep and sun. The reference to contemporary cultural hegemony seemed, however,



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not lost on the audience.

The production's main positive benefit for the Company's future development may be the emphasis placed on collaboration and ensemble work. The director freely and warmly speaks his debt to researcher and designer alike. And although his hand is clearly evident in the overall staging – with the school of American vaudeville, dance numbers and comedy routines and also (part of Dennis Potter's meticulous *Prayer from Heaven* – there is no sense of one man imposing or even over-claiming, whether they be performers or collaborators. The only regret must be the short run (a tribute to success).

At the same time as the STC was giving us a view of the more distant (through our research past), the Stage Company was performing *Bitter For The Better* set in the 1950s (Act I) and the early 1960s (Act II) at the time of the mining boom and collapse. Yet, oddly, the historically more recent second part dominion in terms of its character and atmosphere. Much of this was attributable to the writing, which sought to explore the 1960s period in a style resembling telegraphese. That is, isolated observations and turns of phrase from the time were thrown in as laid an exchange that might otherwise have seemed undramatic in its social and historical context. And when the talk led to a dramatic structure which seemed uncertain whether it could accommodate five or seven different ideas for one play, the result was inevitably diffuse and confused. This is not to deny that the author, Bill App, has talent. The opening scene of Act II, set in an equivalent to Ayckbournland, is cleverly situated and the writingsparkles. It was played with wit and sharpness by the actors and suggested that with more attention to have dramaturgical questions, Mr App has the equipment to write a pointed and accurate social comedy.

But the play's central storyline is top-heavy two matri, one a TV writer, the other a disabled ex-video sales girl. Put together (Matthew Jettner), write a musical together (Lerner and Loewe in Liverland), fall in love an interesting female and instrumental marriage designs and a wise sense of where the power lies (Act II). By Act III, the TV writer has become a money magnet, sales matri is even downer on luck, and then joy! discovers old mining shares now worth thousands. Plus full-scale production of feel-good musical, shares plummet, so does he, hub himself running magnate now goes to prison and schizophrenia through the performers – particularly John Noble and Kathryn Feller, worked hard and conscientiously with the material delegated them. Brian Delamain

direction and the playing were mostly tight, the act seemed unconvincingly unconvincing through the three playing areas tested for played severe demands on the facilities of Theatre 82. Performers and director alike needed better insight and as the evidence of this play for all to know, Bill App ought to provide some in the future.

#### Personal Festuspi

It is noticeable that a critic is treated with the respect that he may feel is his due. However, this particular critic was largely appreciative of the hostile reception lodged in the foyer after the show. From one who should be anonymous, but who is called Alan Lovett: Non-trusting to my ability to read the programme he pointed out that he had been unmercifully panned. Oh, ye of little faith! I was infallibly two steps ahead of him. Alan Lovett is one of Adelaide's most underrated performers and his reading of the role of the down-trodden, often yet curiously alert Georgine was the best among us in the evening and a highlight of a performance.

## Brecht in Adelaide

### THE MOTHER CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE

by Barry Piers

The Mother by Bertolt Brecht, music Hans Eisler, English at the Red Sheet Adelphi 5.4. Opened July 6 1986  
Director David Young, Musical Director Michael Atkinson, Michael Murphy, Poem Michael Shantz, Cast Christopher Anderson, Paula Carter, Peter Dunn, Jon Elsman, Ross Gurne, Geraldine Heilman, Ross Hough, David Kirk, Wendy Madigan, Geoff Revell, Pamela Rumbold, Ruth Rustin  
(Performers)

Troup's production at the Red Sheet is excellent. The Eisler score which maintains such tensions between the music and the lyrics often produces some of the best scenes in the play. Michael Atkinson and Michael Murphy, who together arranged the score, and the ensemble have really combined to make the songs work. The play relentlessly surges forward. The direction by David Young is sympathetic to the overall didactic and political dimension of the work and is very conducive to some superb ensemble playing. The design by Cash Carlton is suitably spartan, but then the Red Sheet needs little for Brecht. Wendy Madigan as the mother, Pelagia Vassena and Jon Firman as her son, Paul Viase give some outstanding performances. When Pavel sings alone in the prison after the visit by Pelagia, of the power of the

State and its ability to oppress and control workers, many agents in the audience exploded. It was great theatre.

Probably the most successful scenes were those that took place in the home of Nikolai Vesovchikov, the teacher – a fine performance from David Kirk. The scene in which he begins to teach the peasant family of Pelagia to read and write combined the political, the social and the personal in one image, while allowing the wisdom beneath the banter to show through. Peter Denning had all his cards well, but particularly that of Vasil Yel'monovich, the trucker. Gwendola Heilman as both Natasha Vesovchikova, a revolutionary worker and Vera Strelanova, the kindly, Geoff Revell, who amongst other parts plays Pavel Sivtsov, Christine Anderson as Masha Khatova, and Ross Hough as Ivan Vesovchikov and Sivtsov were all very good. Michael Murphy's piano accompaniment helped make it an excellent production. There are very few plays worth putting on after fifty years. Brecht's *The Mother* is certainly amongst them few for its politics are still the politics of today.

At the same time as *The Mother* was being performed, there was more Brecht on view in Adelaide, this time a production by the Acting Company of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, written in 1944.

In the form of a parable, the play is concerned with the question of proletarian morality and the problem of proletarian power. Whether we can make decisions between ourselves after free and equal discussion, or whether those decisions are made for us and then imposed from above depends on what kind of society we live in. In the Prologue to *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Bertolt shows the working of proletarian power of exploring class. In "The Story of the Judge" and "The Chalk Circle" Adela, the peasant judge, reveals the internal workings of the law as he is motivated alternately by financial self-interest, sexual, maternal when, and political opportunism not to mention the all-pervading desire to protect private property.

It was a pity that The Acting Company whose ensemble work was at times so very good should have decided to cut the Prologue which is crucially important as an introduction to the parable and to make further cuts to "The Story of the Judge" which tend to reduce the questions of morality and justice in the centrally important ones and replace them with minor issues. Politically *The Mother* is a much more direct play, but *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* has the potential to be exceedingly relevant in the very political matters of justice and injustice.

# THEATRE / VIC



STACEY REEP,  
NORA ALDEN  
SOPHIE STANLEY

## Troubled domesticity

### A DOLL'S HOUSE A BOY FOR YOU, A GIRL FOR ME

by Colin Duckworth

*A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, adapted by Ray Lawler. Melbourne Theatre Company, Abbotsford Theatre, Victoria. Opened 2 July 1990.

Director Ray Lawler, designer Peter Cattaneo, choreography Lucy Burroughs.

Cast: Stacey Reep, Sophie Stanley, Ellen Minge, Margo, Peter, Heather Digby, David Hargreaves, John Stanton, Christine Leslie, Kate Willis, John Knapp, Peter Cattaneo, Dr Ruth Charles Hegarty, Anna Blundell, Robbie Simpson.

(Professionally)

*A Boy for You, a Girl for Me* by Ian Rethke. Melbourne Theatre Company, Abbotsford Theatre, Victoria. Opened 7 July 1990.

Director Judith Alexander, designer Mark Wright, choreography Amanda Maggiano, lighting designer James Lewis.

Cast: Jane Williams, Briony Dunn, Leon Williams,

Frederick Parker, Peter Rogers, Ian Sutherland, Margo, Dr Gwendolyn Amanda Maggiano.

(Professionally)

This year's HSC students have reason to be grateful to the MTC for staging this outstanding example of Ibsen's (other notable ones frequently mentioned by English students being by Strindberg, Chekhov, and even foreign) Post-HSC spectators might be a trifle less pleased, for it was probably with an eye on the youngsters, who easily get restless, that Ray Lawler opted for a melodramatic rendering with strong but rather one-dimensional characterisations.

This certainly brought out the issues, loud and clear, in an audience that as occasions called and asked, so great was their involvement with the plight of poor little Nora at the hands of her villainous husband. Ibsen's contrived plots and his determination to put complex social issues in simple black-and-white dramatic terms often invites assent to the kind of moral confrontation and identification with melodrama. The only question is, should the invasion be accepted or subtly deflected?

It all hangs on the characterisation given to Nora and Torvald. The text gives many clues that Nora is still a child — but not a baby doll. After ten years of married life and three children by a normally-spared husband, she is still a giddy young thing, but she cannot look and sound as though she has been auditioning for a remake of a Shirley Temple filmstrip, and then convincingly turn into a mature and purposeful woman in the final scene. Victoria Dunn depended too much on the schoolgirlishness that had served her so well in *Olive et Cie*, and the schoolroom overtones were reinforced by John Stanton's personification of Torvald as a cross between ranting schoolmaster, sermonising vicar and snappish sergeant-major.

How has Nora put up with this growth blocker for ten years without showing his trial balance up his deficit? Surely, to make their attachment plausible, Torvald has to treat her with benign, avuncular forbearance, at times sounding like always sympathetic to a wayward, immature young girl? The dithering to pieces of Nora's adulated image of Torvald (her potential saviour) and her violent outbursts, lost



Stacey Reep (Nora) and John Stanton (Torvald) in the MTC's *A Doll's House*. Photo David Parker

much of their power and plausibility because of the lack of shading in their relationships. However, it was all lively and clear. It would be good to see John Stanton play Kragstad; he would have achieved the kind of snarly, brooding menace that one missed in Peter Cattaneo, whose hulky was simply too received and too clearly won over by the *Chorus* — a difficult and thankless part in which Kate Willis managed to keep our interest,

despite the halting colourlessness of the role.

Charles Tongwell's warm and affectionate Baner was a delight.

An equally troubled domestic setting is presented to us by Ian Nash in *A Boy for You, a Girl for Me*, which welds together two disparate themes: the vaguely incestuous longing of a mother and father for their son and daughter, who have (understandably) fled the nest and keep their whereabouts



Sophie Stanley (Nora), Ian Sutherland (Torvald) and Frederick Parker (Peter) in the MTC's *A Boy for You, A Girl for Me*. Photo David Parker

hidden, and the rip-off scene of the dance-hall bouncers.

We never know of the children really exist. We could hear Alice country Peter and Heather might just be the phantoms of a childless couple, like George and Martha's son.

When ion Peter (or whatever) sends Jane and Leon a free set of dance lessons, pig and companion develop a lovely and in the first act, take about ten minutes too long. But when the apparently predictable rip-off conspiracy by the ineffective (other) Peter and his partner, Margo, is countered by the lanky machinations of those who were supposed to be the middle-aged victims, an atmosphere of grimy incisive takes over from the unctuous and banal nosediving of Act 1.

Beverley Dunn, in the central role, kept the action together by an unlikely mixture of manicured nervous energy and doggedly dowdy naivety. Ian Sutherland's infantile regressions and Amanda Maggiano's switches from abusive violence to unctuous sales talk showed her sensitivity. Frederick Parker was smarmy and bumbling, but was often engrossing for the slow pace.

# Dickins Dominates

THE KEN WRIGHT SHOW  
DEATH OF MINNIE  
POUPHARY'S WIFE

by Susan Spenser

The Ken Wright Show By Barry Dickins, From Theatre By Peter Foster, Melbourne 70, Opened July 8 1982

Devised/Drama: Producer: John Tamburin, Stage Manager: Catherine Poole, Design: Peter King, Original Music: Danny Nade, Music and words: Barry Dickins, Special Director: Peter King, Cast: Ken Wright, Corrie Scott, with Richard Healy, Linda Crotty, Diane Ark, Marilyn O'Donnell, Jacqueline White, Peter King, Barry Dickins.

(Photographs)

Anger's Wife by Margaret Miller and The Death of Minnie by Barry Dickins. Upstairs at The Playbox, Melbourne 70, Opened July 10 1982

Devised/Peter Lorre, Design: Sue Green, Stage Manager: Nicola Kirby.

Lori Pogson's self: Ann Friedl, Musical Montage, Sue Green.

(Photographs)

If we can begin to talk of Post-War Australian Drama then at least in Melbourne in the eighties Barry Dickins is an Example. To date he has had productions in the three main theatre circles beginning with *Sweeney Todd* at La Mama and now *The Ken Wright Show*, at The Playbox and *Death of Minnie* at the Playbox and so it must only be a matter of time before he's having his own theatrical Legend.

With the production of *The Ken Wright Show* in the Print Theatre of the Print we are finally able to see the "new" AFG Ensemble in full flight after their abysmal debut in *Requiem Rousier*. Now that John Tamburin has returned to his one place at the helm, we only has the Print been cleaned up (let alone purged), but a production under Diane Moore's direction has been got together of which we can need be ashamed. To walk into The Print on the opening night of *The Ken Wright Show* was to enter a theatre again - the sense of reconnection and optimism was profuse.

In *The Ken Wright Show*, Barry Dickins has created an enchanting image of Austral innocence in his identity-building Ken - a man of the eighties, who says nothing and sees less. Ken is somewhere between Chaplin and The Bloke, and if in a sense he speaks for the author, then it is indeed the lowest profile Mr. Dickins has ever assumed. By making the main character silent and using the device of Len Taek Digitalis (the talking radio ghost), Dickins utilises himself as his favorite party piece (improvising Mr. Blokesque) while for the first time successfully writing himself out of his work.

Playing a silent figure centre stage is potentially an extremely potent image,



Marilyn O'Donnell (Minnie) in The Ken Wright Show, 1982

particularly when everyone we and function no trouble talking, however in this production the dynamic which could ensue from that contradiction did not, or at least did not to the extent which it should have. Thus Ken and ultimately his ghost remained shadowy and unengaged as Ken never really made the transition from Fool to Oracle. Indeed the characters around him - his family, friends and workmates and consulting psychiatrist came to assume greater weight than the writing could bear.

Acting for the most part remained at the level of caricature which was appropriate except that for most of the action it was consciousness of their previous roles. Thus audience unfamiliar with the work of Marilyn O'Donnell, Peter King and Jo White were entertained adequately by their performances, but for me it was only Richard Healy who created unique, particular creatures out of the many roles he took on, his portrayal of the ramshackle book factory boss was a startling example of the possibilities of sharp comic playing.

Peter King's design with its rolling props on castors and the beautiful Els, bed wet as evening as they were expressive of Dickins, however I was disappointed that the beautifully scented cloud flax were not utilised more. *The Ken Wright Show* was the most positive direction you can from the Ensemble, they have caught the boat and now we await the course into unchartered seas.

Meanwhile at The Playbox Ann Friedl and Peter Green were doing the best possible with a rather pretentious and finally shallow piece of writing and throwing their hearts and souls into a

something that bountifully rewarded imaginative interpretation. Both plays are dramatic analogues for the female qua woman (Jewel Princess), but beyond that they are miles apart in attitude, sensibility and intention. *Pouphary's Wife* is one of society's winners who wishes she were of its masters, while *Minnie* is a loser who calls the judge's bluff.

Ironically you come out of *Pouphary's Wife* feeling satisfied or at least cheered enough to feel like contemplating divine action, and you come out of *The Death of Minnie* having witnessed suicide and yet feeling that life is even more worth living. For as much sympathy as one has with Pouphary's Wife at the beginning it is quickly replaced by a feeling of intense irritation and ultimately with sheer boredom because the experience (in the language in which it is expressed) is so thoroughly assimilated it looks and feels like it is not simply a matter of simple everyday language language inexorably being the locus of genuine expression and poetic or "vertical" language dawning latency, because Dickins creates for his marvellous Minnie a language scented and enlivened with wit, imagery and resonance.

*The Death of Minnie* is the most sustained and interesting piece that Dickins has written this year, and I am beginning to feel that it, together with *Brook Lane* and *The Horror of The Suburban House Spy* indicate that he has amongst Australian male playwrights an exceptional ability to create bizarre wonderful worlds perhaps who could partner Hobson's equally wonderful mad men.



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# Powerful and obscure

WILFRED GOMBROWICZ  
IN BUENOS AIRES

by Catherine Peake

THEATRE AUSTRALIA, 10 AUGUST 1986. By Roger Pollock. In Spanish. Directed by Luis Valdez. At Teatro del Pueblo, 1000 Corrientes, 1000. Tel: 432-10-10. Director: Roger Pollock. Design: Peter Lang. Stage Manager: Susana Mazzatorta. Lighting: Juan William Echaz. Music: Adolfo Salas. Cast: William Lynch, Susana Mazzatorta, Luis Valdez, William Pollock. Photo: Richard Murphy. Production: Luis Valdez.

There are some kinds of theatre which encompass their subject despite all efforts to the contrary. By contrast, Roger Pollock's play seems to want to insist that it can only explore the power of encompassing and dominate conversion.

In general he is a playwright that never lets us lose sight of the artificiality and constructedness of his stage. His theatre is always built within a wall that defies classification. It is at half-tempest and half-silence.

Watching his most recent play, *Wilfred Gombrowicz en Buenos Aires*, it is the abstractions of symbolic logic or the master chess game which spring to mind. Like much of his work, *Wilfred Gombrowicz en Buenos Aires* the play pushes its surface in black surfaces. Once again the roundabout, those of alienation and survival through love under the Polish post and ungloryful sun of the 80's, from which it takes its title, contributes very much to the way it plays in its meaning.

*In retrospect* is a play that tends initially into a series of framed and usually darkly comic stills. A giddy man-hunting saint, a swishing, a bag of passenger stamps, a nuptial and a BP all have their place in a script laced with philosophical ideas and literary references.

The general scenario of *Wilfred Gombrowicz* is one of war complete with soldiers and tanks, and female "local singers" and avoid men, all of whom are caught up in such pronounced stereotypes of pain, surrender and torture that they immediately raise the larger issues of good and evil, sensibility and death.

Under the direction of the playwright the play is paced so that the first three scenes unfold in slow motion states of violence, persecution and terror. The characters are not composed in any depth but behave more like vehicles for the demonstration of abstract emotions and ideas and their interaction is calculated to

underline the familiar by constantly dislocating, perverting and obliquecising from their "natural" origins.

The action of the play is both powerful and obscure and is played with a confidence and skill that is exhilarating. The centralised focus of the play, spearheaded by William Zappa's character, "real singer," verges on the manic, and the tension between idea and image is much too rapid to be coherent.

The play ends with a continuing series of symbols and archetypes. The old man is murdered with a metal spike, destruction is changed and William Gobbo, beneath the sand, and someone must be suddenly

transformed over an unlikely Austin and peripheral.

At *La Mama*, Harold Bloomfield is staged on something like a Peter Brook's *pink* set. The design is spare and sophisticated and an excellent but far writing which is simultaneously and remarkably open about its own habits of time, collage and atomic quotation.

If, and once, and certainly this reviewer was convinced at a few in turns what the play was about, but we were also intrigued by its living, presentist qualities as an invigorating deviation from the conventions of plot, character and narrative sequence.



Vivian Black and William Zappa in *Wilfred Gombrowicz en Buenos Aires*. Photo: Andrew Dineen

# THEATRE/WA

STYLISH  
WITH SPARKS



## Might have worked better

LOOT

by CINI GILLAM

Cast: Jim Orton, National Theatre Company, Macbeth Park St, Circular Quay, 10pm, 20 Oct-10 Nov 1990  
Director: Stephen Bayly; Design: Tony Trapp; Lighting: Dominic Bell; Stage Manager: Graeme Donald  
Cost: \$25-55; Music: Ogden, Fox, Jimmy McNeair and Scott Macggor; Credit: Michaela; Front-of-House: Trevor Heath; Production: Frank Johnson  
PP: \$10.50

There can be little doubt that *Loot* is the play written by Joe Orton before he was murdered in 1967. *Loot* is the one which will keep him in the commercial theatre repertoire. *Loot* is a brilliantly crafted piece, which refutes that tortured-martyr shock without outrage which Orton had first evidenced with

### Entertaining Mr Sloane

*Loot* adds to this, however, a plot grafted together in haphazard fashion from the controlled bawdiness of love and the involving intricacies of the detective mystery, reinforcing the comic gloomlessness of its track with coffin and twisted corpses with some really staggering satire against the London Metropolitan Police (although any boyish will do). As such then, *Loot* sparkles with possibilities for performer and director alike. Alas, too few of these possibilities have been realised in The Playhouse production.

The single most important reason for the manifold disappointments of this production was voiced long ago by Orton himself, when he clearly warned that "... if *Loot* is played as no more than farce, it won't work". It's true that *Loot* over-reaches, formally, to the conventions of farce but it won't do to reduce it to farce alone, particularly if such reduction involves performers "mugging up" to the audience to alert them to the upcoming "funny bit". Nearly all the comedy comes from the fundamental misconceptions of the respective fast minds of nearly all the characters, the grotesqueness, mayhem and insights toward old fashioned farce in which they are so intensely involved. The key must be "deadpan", quite straight and straight through.

It's no use smugly laughing like

ironically all right, as nearly all the cast was wont to do. Not only does such an approach insult the intelligence of the audience (always assuming that one's audience is possessed of sufficient collective intelligence to recognise an insult but much more importantly one slows the pace, forces the laughs and cheapens the play).

In the light of this one-dimensionalised approach (an evasive and ugly performance, I'll admit but rather less evasive a charge than an amateurish substance), it is not one could not expect (and did not) get much in the way of performances - even from Maurice Ogden and Jenny McNeair, whom one might have thought capable, experienced and gifted in comedy as they are, of getting around the problem. Ogden's Mr McLeavy was very disappointing, a characterisation too unrelentingly whining and further blighted by a fake Irish accent which wallowed up the sense of most of his lines. As Fay, Jenny McNeair seemed very uneasy with the part's mixture of domestic life and there being home-help - so uneasy in fact that she seemed at times to playing the two parts in turn.

As Hal, Scott Macggor simply gave off too great an impression of male and boozing health, which was a little too incongruous for a lad who'd been only in breiflets. There was in fact far too little,



both in his Ham and Gerald Hitchcock's Dennis, of that frighteningly faint attachment (as of the aging soul) which Dennis's wife suggests in the midst of many less opportunities, however! Trevor Rend made the most of his as Romeo, borrowing for that comic authoritarian just as many Cheesman mannerisms as he needed (including the famous Fiddly Tiddly-blarr!) and priggishly small feet that he could remain the master of them. A strong, in fact soaring performance.

I've probably been a little unfair to director Stephen Barry in the review since, despite my comments to date, his production is at least in terms of a warm reception by the audience like that as I've already said it's a brilliant play, and will always work. I'm simply saddened by the thought that it might have worked so much better had so much time wasted for the sake of a little subtlety.

## Gems here and there

### IT WAS THE LARK

by Margot Lake

at the Dr Fox in Lyndhurst Studios in the Hall from 8.30, August 21, 1980  
Directed Roger Moulton, Designer William Bond, Stage Manager Michael Harvey, Lighting Alan Simms  
Cast John Newell, Lynette Rose, Barry Rostron, Peter Lawrence, Vic Hawkes, William Shakespeare, Roger Moulton  
*(Photocopy)*

This is Lyndhurst Kushner's first play to be produced anywhere in Australia (as the programme informs us), which seems surprising, considering his success overseas. He's a very funny writer, but it's only gone a long way.

We are asked to imagine that Romeo and Juliet did not die in that fatal night all but one instead, on the thirtieth year of their marriage. They still argue fiercely about that bird of long ago - was it in fact the lark or the nightingale? and are generally sick to death of one another.

The two now old but with laughter amiss a group, they live on Nescio and spring onions and Romeo though described as a ballet teacher, wants to be unemployed, which means Juliet cannot afford a maid - a maidservant that has become her obsession.

Their warring interest in each other and their poverty are the mainspring of dramatic conflict. Romeo compares with Juliet's name, now seventy-five and companion to Juliet's rich but invaded mother, no kill the old woman discreetly,

with a view to entering hellions, while Juliet has secret meetings with Peter Lawrence, their eighteen-year-old son and a proper, as much about Romeo, who has fallen passionately in love with his half-water bottle, called Lise.

Kushner introduces two new characters, Juliet's daughter Lorraine, an adolescent teenager in turbulent adolescence "Nestor Members", and the ghost of William Shakespeare, who acts as referee in the dormitory. Romeo has eventually falls in love with Lorraine and departs with her.

To add to the layers of the situation there is some tricky doubling of roles. Juliet, Lorraine and the Nurse are all played by Rosemary Bay having a ball with alternating dignities, shapes and accents (not to mention the anticipated timing of costume changes), while The Hawks' numbers abound as an unstable Romeo one minute, and then immediately returns lithering and dithering as an improbably Czech Peter Lawrence. Only the Bard is allowed to be uniquely himself, played by Edgar Micallef in packish peri-style and gloriously tacky costume (black with rings of mostly silver bras).

The first half of the play is thoroughly enjoyable. Juliet is neatly-wound, harcavours (which turn out to be a wig which is replaced by a more suitable daytime wig), Romeo's pop-sop... he does the washing-up singing, "Morendelle Beladonna, if we only had a maid", Peter Lawrence persists in confusing Romeo with that morose Danish lad always reading and dressed in black, the Nurse huge and lecherous, singing the light fantastic with Romeo, as they are plotting the mazda, Lorraine disapproves that Shakespeare didn't write "I could have danced all night" (disco-verse) and Shakespeare continues in appropriate quotations from his better known works (after all he owns the copyright).

In Act II the things begin to really both surprising and fresh seem like the comic situations seem forced and the literary allusions, particularly the discussion about the true author of *The Play* become a bit tedious. Romeo - the prima will glaze here and there, Juliet persists. Romeo's wife to the accompaniment of the washerwoman from Macbeth, whereas Shakespeare gives Romeo some posse "bound in the ear of Hamlet's father".

Of course it's wildly unfair to make comparisons but the talkative aspects of a Shakespearean sendup can't out for the linguistic inadequacy of Tom Stoppard. The present play succeeds with a handful of comic devices until they are stretched beyond their limits, and with some ruthless pruning it would probably turn into the romp it was intended to be.

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# BOOKS

IN REVIEW  
STEPHEN SOWELL



## Old and new

**Rusty Bugles**, by Sumner Locke Elliott  
Currency Press, pp 54-93.

**Three Political Plays** (edited by Alfred Kyte), University of Queensland Press, pp 89-95.

How quickly nostalgia sets in! The Independent Theatre in Sydney in later years was generally derided for its old-fashioned attitudes and programming. In the magazine Rex Chapman gave one of his most sorrowful and yet most virulent attacks on one of their renegade productions of Shakespeare. And yet almost as the theatre closed people began looking back fondly on its struggles and triumphs. Like many fine companies it began years ahead of its time and finished rather behind its time - but in the case of the Independent that process took more than four years, which in Australian theatre is an exceptionally good run-time. When (in a few months, no doubt) we begin to look back nostalgically on the Grand Old Days of the Old Tote we shall not be thinking of nearly such an achievement. The successors of the Tote were timely but the Independent struggled through decades when theatre was a much more risks undertaking than it is now.

Apart from a particular personal interest (I was introduced to theatre through classes at the lady at the tender age of thirteen) it is good to see an old Independent show published in Currency with an introduction by Dame Eaton herself (Dame Eaton, to me). And like the Independent in 1948, *Rusty Bugles* was well ahead of its time. It is a relaxed realistic account of life among soldiers stationed at a Northern Territory supply depots during the Second World War, but it also has a sense of 'stress' - a sense of pre-continence, and a strong feeling for place and mood, and life (like us going on) which should have been more influential than they were. Its central

image of sitting around through a thin Solstice and into the War, waiting for Leave, has a lot of respect now, and it is a pity that the lack of a theatrical tradition there and the impact of the much more emotionally centred *Red* made *Rusty Bugles* a curio.

In spite of its specific north-east treated subject, *Rusty Bugles* is formally the most interesting play written before the Fifties. It is witty, incisive and undramatic in a way which perfectly reflects a common view of the Australian character. It is theatrically effective in its humour, atmosphere and gentle acceptance of

values. Sowell charts the different attitudes of a father, a mother and their two sons to the political, social and economic forces which control their lives, and which include a暮氣派 group of the sort which many Australians, especially Queenslanders, are variously anticipating. By giving a clear and rich sense of individual lives lived *between spheres* he maintains the relationship between broad political processes and individual experience of them. The play has the economy and proportion of David Hare's plays, with which it shares some concerns, but it has a brilliant final image from which it takes its title. We are conscious for the first time, of his stopping caring, and the true social effects of this rest of the play have resolved into a single last sound of virtue as the old man stands and stares out to sea. The great sadness which the outside political struggle has brought to his life makes this final vision of him, with his toy bucket and birthday cake, very powerful. Sowell shows the clarity and directness and sure touch of a very fine theatre writer.

Steve J Speary's *Rape Richard* is an effective drama of the corruption and power-mongering in "high" places which we all now assume. *King Richard* and *Snowball* play are both definitely post-November 11, 1975. Speary plays a power game between a leading politician and a leading (prison) inmate. The craftsmanship is as sure, and the wit and turns of the plot so exquisitely contrived that we completely forget whatever political meaning it might have. The world of the play is causally and apparently corrupt but it is hardly anti-socially, and yet it immediately a serious subject.

John Bradley's *Dark Side*, according to Bill Hudson, who provides the Foreword to this volume, "was a straightforwardly leftist book, an allegorical illustration of how well-meaning men who wanted to be free and to live others' best command of a system they did not understand and therefore could not control" which sure the play up better than I could. I find it very confusing. It is neither grounded in recognisable reality, nor high in my own created world. But it has a strong central visual image (but not dramatic, rather than theatrical) and has some tantalising, because unperformed moments at present.

I have never been to Brisbane, but if a Home must be a good little theatre, II nothing else this volume should contradict the aversion sometimes heard that all the hot new plays go to the big state capitals.

## Rusty Bugles

Sumner Locke Elliott



**review** It is to be hoped that this new publication will revive professional interest in the play.

**Three Political Plays** is one of those slightly artificial periodical volumes, vaguely linked by a theme (I used to have one called *Their Plays*, after Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne). As Stephen Sowell points out, "political plays" merely means "left-wing plays", and with the exception of his own, they're not very radical. A more interesting point linking the plays is that they were all (as predicted at Brisbane's La Boite theatre) and if we get *Volume of Inverna Plays* and *Almond Tree Plays* (they won't), we can have *La Boite Plays*.

The most interesting is *La Boite Plays*. The Author (he lived on a Beach in the Sun, when a strict sun-tan教練 polices the series of details, bathing and sunbathing,

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*Percy in the Driver's Seat* by Tony Hartog.

*Peter and the Wolf* by Peter and Malcolm Frazerley, directed by Malcolm Frazerley, with music by Gary Smith. Commences September 13.

BONDI PAVILION THEATRE (38 7211)

*Cave* by Phyllis Director. Directed by Maxwell Dethorne-Smith, with Valerie Spelman. Until September 13.

BREAD AND CIRCUS COMMUNITY THEATRE (28 3566)

The Lightworks Theatre Restaurant, 171 Pitt Street. *Up The Avenue And Down The Street* by Bread And Circus. Director, Frank Barry. Fridays and Saturdays.

CAPTAIN THEATRE (235 7422)

*The Alpha*. Play by Alan. September 19 & 20.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (199 8877)

*Cold Storage* by Ronald Kohring, directed by Hayes Geeson, with Lee Kitching, Brian Young and Jessie Barrie. Throughout September.

FIRST STAGE THEATRE COMPANY (62 1603)

*The Master of the House* by Jerry. Directed by Garry Baxter, directed by Chris Lewis, with Angela Bonne, Duncan Currigan and Gary Buttrey. Tuesday to Saturday throughout September.

FRANK STRALIERI BUILT IN BUSH THEATRE RESTAURANT (137 8271)

*That's What I'm Talking About*. A return of the continuing today. With Ned Beatty, Barbara Wyman, Garrick Hagon, Ned Beatty and Helga Lorens, directed by Georgia Carter. Throughout September.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (212 5481)

*The Bachelor Pad* by Terri by Larry King and Peter Masterson, directed by Jerry Todor, with Loraine Bayly, Allyn Sandor and Morna Richardson. Commences September 13.

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (28 2336)

*Quotations* by Bertolt Brecht. Directed by Anne Neentz with Sue Cruckshank, Beverly Blackstock, Alice McFadzean, Myfanwy Morgan, Fatti Garfield, David Wood, Car Lehmann. Throughout September.

THE KING O'MALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (922 6501)

The Studio Theatre. *Errol Flynn's Great Adventure* Book for Ross by Bob George, directed by Les Mansfield, with

Markie Dingle, Sean Scully, John Rattner, Robert Hughes, Ross Spears and Anne Craig. September 1-28.

KIRRIEMILLER PUP THEATRE (192 1445)

Kirribilli Hotel. *Missin's Party*. *The Robin Hood Show* by Perry Quantum and Paul Chubb, directed by Perry Quantum, with Lester Smith, Michael Ferguson and Ross Hobson. Throughout September.

LILY CHIRIBIE PRESENTATIONS (199 5671)

Colours, a programme of folk songs and sketches depicting colonial Australia devised and performed by Colin Douglas and Tony Sauer for infants, primary and secondary. NSW commences throughout September. *Madeline Poppy*. Theatre programme of missionary music devised by Michael Freeland for infants, primary and secondary. Metropolitan area throughout September.

LIVING FLAME LUNCHTIME THEATRE (232 1200)

AMP Theatre, Circular Quay. *Blue* by Helen Dunn, directed by Michael Martin Evans, with Felicity Gordon and Helen Dunn. Commences Sept. 1.

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (199 3160)

*The Brothelmeir* by W. Somerset Maugham, directed by Bob Cutts, with Alastair Duncan, Lynn Rainbow, Reg Gilpin, Michael Gow, Philippa Baker, Emma LeNay, Penny Cook and Terry Pack.

THE MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (239 8850)

Drama Theatre, SOH. *The Man's Clothing* by Norman Lindsay, directed by Richard Bradshaw. Until September 6.

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (199 8222)

*Eve* by Mrs Henry Wood, directed by Alison Harvey, with Alison Harvey, Bernadine Horakova, Mel Carnegie and Christine Cannon. Until September 6.

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (877 6545)

*At the Zoo*, a musical review with the Tappano family and Lorina Desmond. Throughout September.

NEW THEATRE (319 3403)

*We Can't Get It We Won't Get It* by Dame Fo, directed by Jerome Levy. Until early September.

*Welle Knug* by Bill Bryden, directed by Jon Williams. Commences mid September.

NIMROD THEATRE (199 3803)

*Upstage Across the Island* by Louis Neva, directed by Neil Arnalid, with Debra Shearer, Martin Vaughan and Judy Davis. Until September 14.

*Downstairs*. Script written in Chicago by David Mamet, directed by Ken

Beecher Commences September 17  
Last Night Shows Shop Never Bought with Ward, Johnson, Koko and Curtis September 5 and 6  
Falling in Love Agitated and played by Jan Correll and Elizabeth Drak Commences September 26  
**NEW THEATRE OF THE DEAF**  
(197 1200)  
The "Sister" Journeys for primary schools and The Undead World of Angels (an hour for secondary schools, both directed by Ian Watson, with Nola Collier, David London, Colin Allen, Bryan Jones and Rosemary Jones) Metropolitan area throughout September

**Q THEATRE** (147 28 3231)  
The Moonstruck by Harold Pinter, until September 13 at Peach, September 17-20 at Orange and September 24-27 at Mackay

**RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY**  
(1699 25 3693)

Getaway directed by Peter Barclay September 12-16

**SEYMOUR CENTRE** (842 0835)

York Theatre Carnival from September 13 to 21

Emmett Theater James Joyce's Women written and edited by Pamela Flanagan directed by Bergen McDonald, with Pamela Flanagan and Robert O'Hearn September 2-20

**SHINEBRIGHT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE** (588 3489)

Free drama workshops on weekend include playbuilding, mime, dance, puppetry, drama radio and video. Shakespeare's Caesar touring city schools with The Company by William Shakespeare and Christopher Slye. Slye re-created by the cast and directed by Brett Bray Youth Theatre Showcase. Romeo Energy Dance Company September 3-6. Shugliang Caoxin's production of The Trojan September 11, 12, 19 and 20.

**SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY** (20388)

Drama Theatre, SDH  
Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand, translated by Louis Nuss, directed by Richard Wharre, with John Bell, Helen Morse and Andrea McFarlane. Until September 2

The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare, directed by Mick Rodger with Jennifer Clare, Janet Egan, Max Phipps, Carol Hayes and Helen Ramsay Commences September 18

**THEATRE ROYAL** (221 6111)

Don't Marry Our Son by Ned Sherrin, directed by Phil Coxon, with Jackie Walker and John Watt. Throughout September.

**THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA** (20388)  
The Magic Flute by Mozart, conducted by Richard Bonynge and produced by John Copley. Mozart's Lieder by Purcell, conducted by William Reid and produced

by John Copley. Ein maskenball by Donizetti, conducted by Richard Bonynge and produced by John Copley. The Barber of Seville by Rossini, conducted by Peter Neyman and produced by John Cox. Fra Diavolo by Auber conducted by Richard Bonynge and David Kram and produced by John Copley.

**GAY THEATRE COMPANY** (157 3942)

Wayne Chapel Theatre, 29 High St, Kings Cross. Sydney Boys by Colin Spenser, director, John Tinkler, designer. Anthony Balmer To Sept 20

For review contact Cascade Four on 02 730 809 3800

# QLD

## THEATRE

**ARTS THEATRE** (16 2346)

What The Butler Saw by Joe Orton directed Leon Hardwick. Wed and Sat To Sept 13

The Merry Go-Round Wine Round by Barbara Stellmach, director, Barbara Stellmach, designer, Michael Morris Sept 22-Oct 4

**BRISBANE ACTORS' COMPANY** (221 9913)

Phone 348 1679 for details

**LA BOITE THEATRE** (36 1628)

Travels by Steve Sewell, director Malcolm Blaylock To Sept 13

Legend Of King O'Malley by Baddy and Ellis, director Malcolm Blaylock Sept 14-Oct 18

**QUEENSLAND AND ARTS COUNCIL** (221 59981)

On Tour Queensland Theatre Company. Driftless by Ira Levin, director, Peter Duncan with Tony Ingberman, Frank Lloyd and Barbara Neophytos.

Accommodation by Vick Hall, director, Lloyd Nakkin, South Australian Department of Education presents Bruce Raymond's Published Man.

**QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY** (221 2881)

Omeara Edge by Richard Harris, director, Alan Edwards, designer, Graeme Macdonald -?

# DANCE

**HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE**

(221 2771)

The Australian Ballet presents Anne Astorino Sept 5-11

**QUEENSLAND BALLET COMPANY**

(221 1879)

Schubert Theatre Five One Act Ballets

For Dr Quare, choreographer, Ted Miller, After The Ball, choreographer, Austin Tappe. River Festival, choreographer, August Bourneville. Sanger Parade, choreographer Don Astor. Sir And She, choreographer, Harold Collins Sept 26-27

# OPERA

**QUEENSLAND OPERA COMPANY** (221 2775)

Her Majesty's Theatre

Mozart by Friedrich von Flotow, producer John Thompson, designer Allan Luca, conductor Graeme Young Sept 20, 26, 30 Oct 2, 4

Don Pasquale by Donizetti, producer John Wilson, conductor Graeme Young, designer Tom Langford Sept 23, 27 Oct 1, 3

For review contact Cascade Four on 02 730 809 3800

# SA

## THEATRE

**ANNE CALDWAHL OF COMMUNITY THEATRE** (221 8660)

Clarendon Arts Centre. Young script writers workshop Sept 8-13

**ARTS THEATRE**

Angus, St George, Steele by Peter Yeldham and David Churchill, directed, Michael Morris Sept 21-Oct 4

**CORE THEATRE COMPANY**

Young Alice Lynch's Fighting L, a play about unemployment and superstition and Furniture Show, a play about the politics of nuclear and solar energy. Available for schools and community groups.

**MAGPIE THE TEAM** (211 5130)

Metropolitan schools, Government Town, David Foote's I'll Love Me Three Affairs. The Bath and Voyager Sept 13-Nov 10.

**Q THEATRE** (221 5651)

99 Hounds St. You Can't Take It With You by George Kaufman and Moss Hart, director Harry Hill Sept 6-31

**STATE THEATRE COMPANY** (211 5131)

Playhouse. The Man From Malangana by Dorothy Brett, director, Karen Palmer, designer, Sue Russell Sept 1-6. What The Butler Saw by Joe Orton directed, Kevin Palmer, designer, Vicki Etchison Sept 12-Oct 4

Theatre 62. Pericles, Prince of Tyre by William Shakespeare, director, Nick Enright, designer, Richard Roberts Sept 1-6.

Trunk by Stephen Sondheim, director, Nick Enright, designer, Richard Roberts Sept 10-Oct 4

THEATRE GUILD (22 3401)

Acting Company: Country side of Mount Gambier, Loxton, Wyndham, Kangaroo Island, South Australia  
Theatre Workshop: Hawker

THEATRE GROUP (21 0764)

At the Red Shed: *Shrubs* (Australia) by Damon Clarke, director, David Young Sept 1-26

For enquires contact Theatre Guild on 223 6670

# TAS

## THEATRE

POLYUON THEATRE COMPANY (14 8010)

Drama Studio, PCAR, 3rd flr Old People, director, Alan Harvey Sept 17 28, 29-31

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY (21 5350)

In repertory throughout Sept

THEATRE ROYAL (34 6260)

Mr Fox (Australia) with Stuart Wagstaff Sept 1-13

## DANCE

THEATRE ROYAL (34 6260)  
Sydney Dance Company Sept 17-20

For enquires contact Anne Copeland on 2161 2747/4750

# VIC

## THEATRE

ALEXANDER THEATRE (54 0290)

The Broken Players: *Prater Of Vienna* by Gilbert and Sullivan Sept 27-Oct 4

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE GROUP (14 7713)

From Theatre A: a new ensemble show *Closet Rose* by Caryl Churchill, director, Peter King, Throughout Sept

Buck Theatre: *Bouquet Of Poems* by Jean-Pierre Miquelon To Sept 28

ARENA THEATRE (24 9667)

*Chapel Fashions* by Dorothy Hewett, director Steve Wallace Sept 4-13

Young School: *The White Tie Bazaar*

Throughout Sept

There That Ever Dost by Ken Loche  
Throughout Sept

Touring: Lower Primary *Where To Funds* by Bern Depinet  
Community Access Workshops Saturday afternoons and Monday nights

ARTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (22 4651)

*Pop Dover Song* in Colonial folk tradition with Michelle and Mike Jackson

*The Man From Home* from the original folk story by Norman Lindsay, by the Marionette Theatre of Australia  
Throughout Sept

COMEDY THEATRE (1862 3231)

The Playbox Theatre Company presents *John Prufitt*, Pam Gurn, director, Murray Copland with Joanne Lowry Throughout Sept

COMEDY CAFE

Brunswick St, Prahran: Original comedy entertainment with Rod Quastock

DRAMA RESOURCE CENTRE (147 2649)

Touring Schools: THE Team presents *To Do Or Not To Do* a comic-book melodrama based on the frustration that students face when leaving school to join the work force

FLYING TRAPEZE CAEE (41 3721)

Mining French Picnic Picnic, director, Joe Bobo with Adrienne Sack, Jesse Margossian, Tim O'Sullivan and Simon Langford Throughout Sept

HER MAJESTY'S (1663 2310)

Estate, director, Harold Pinter, Choreographer Larry Fuller, Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, Musical director, Peter Casey, Lyricist, Tim Rice with Jennifer Murphy, Peter Carroll, John O'May Throughout Sept

LA MAMA THEATRE (247 6081)

In One Act: A musical event with Donmarum De Clerck Sept 5-6?

Ran by Colin Ryan, From Sept 11.

LAST LAUGH THEATRE

RESTAURANT (149 6251)

Downton: The King Sur: Western A Country and Western road-up comedy Sept 1-26

Upstage Show changing weekly

MELOBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (224 4000)

Athenaeum: *The Matchmaker* by Thornton Wilder, director, Simon Clivens, designer, James Edwards, with Vivien Davies, Mairon Knight, Charles Tingwell, and Peter Carton Throughout Sept

Russell Street: *As You Like It* by Ron Einsohn, director, Judith Alexander, designer, Paul Cook, with Margaret Cameron, Marlene Edwards, Bob McMillan, Ray Lawler, Tim Hughes, David Raksin and Alex Longman Throughout Sept

Athenaeum: *The March* by Jean Genet, director, Elizabeth Alexander, with Ann Pendlebury, Linden Wilkinson and Ann Charleton

MURRAY RIVER PERFORMING GROUP (21 3625)

Albury: *Then I'll See Above Me*, a Pub-Club show with Robert Farmer Throughout Sept

NATIONAL THEATRE (234 6221)

*Dr Rau* a comedy with Reg German and Judith Roberts From Sept 11

PALAIN THEATRE (234 0681)

Clifford Hocking and Playbox Theatre Company present *Acrobats Of China* with the Nanking Acrobatic Troupe Sept 16-27

PLAYBOX THEATRE COMPANY (65 4881)

Upstairs: *Barber Child* by Sam Shepard, director, Roger Polkyn, with Linda Davies, Robin Cummings, John Arnold, Geoffrey Clinton, Michelle Stoyner and William Clark To Sept 11

*David Dawson* by David Mamet, director, William Clark, with Malcolm Robertson Also playing *Half Past* by David Edgar Sept 25-Oct 11

UNIVERSAL THEATRE (419 4177)

Swan by Barron Oakley and Stacey Leigh, *A Wealth Record* by Anton Chekhov, director, Neil Armfield, with Max Gillies Sept 3-Oct 2

UNION THEATRE (147 8181)

*Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, director, David Kendall Sept 4-13

WEST COMMUNITY THEATRE (378 3334)

Gals, a song and dance performance by Linda Waters, for Community women's group. Also playing *Murder Assets*, a travelling Pub Show, with Jim Macdonald and Bronwyn Barnes

AMATEUR THEATRES

Bass Theatre Group (763 9882)

Clayton Theatre Group (871 8972)

Hoddleburg Rep (48 2262)

Malvern Theatre Co (211 8620)

Parkin Theatre (42 8237)

## DANCE

NATIONAL THEATRE (514 6221)

The National Folk Dance Company, director, Madeline Marks Beresowsky Sept 9-13

## OPERA

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (03 5061)

Touring with Victorian Arts Council *Andromache*, director, Peter Jordan, conductor, Richard Dillat with John Wood, Rosemary Boyle, Geoffrey Burns

For enquires contact *Carries Answer* on 267 3838

# WA

## THEATRE

THE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE  
(03) 4766

The Nanking Aerobatic Troupe of China  
Sept 3-4

**THE HAYMAN THEATRE (03) 7026)**

*The Devils* by John Whiting, director,  
Steve Jodrell. Sept 13-27

**HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE (03) 6255)**

*Crown Mavineau* by Roger Rydin,  
director. Peter Williams, with Jane Salter  
and John Hamblin. Sept 6-27

**THE WHOLE IN THE WALL**

(03) 2403

*Daughter Of The Author's Daub Shop*

director, Mike Morris. To Sept 8

Year's Workshop *The Audience* director,  
Peter Martin. Sept 9-13

*No Exit* by Jean-Paul Sartre, director,  
Edgar Mitchell. Sept 17-Oct 11

**THE NATIONAL THEATRE (03) 18000)**

*Arrival* by Peter, director. Stephen  
Barry. Sept 18-Oct 11

*Empress* (page 1) by Jason London,  
director. Marcus McNaughton, with Nita  
Purnell. To Sept 13

**THE REGAL (03) 1257)**

*Private Lives* by Noel Coward, director,  
Edgar Mitchell, with Edward Woodward  
and Michelle Danner. To Sept 20

**THE UNIVERSITY THEATRES**

(03) 24460)

*Oxbridge Theatre Night And Doublet*  
Sept 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

*Dolphin Theatre: The Lion Of Vienna* (page 2)  
*Man In The Moon* (page 3)  
by Paul Zindel, director, Hal Danner. Sept 3-  
20

## DANCE

WA BALLET COMPANY

In residence Mt Lawley College. Sept 1-13.

## OPERA

**HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE**

(03) 6255)

*The Trouser Of The Guard* Gilbert and  
Sullivan Society. To Sept 6

For tickets contact Joan Andreou on  
299 6839

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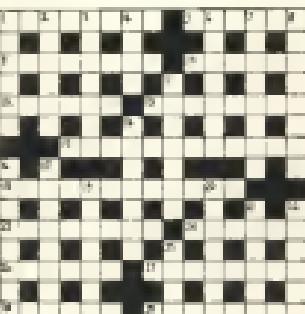
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